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OF THE  
SAINTS AND BLESSED  
OF THE THREE ORDERS OF  
SAINT FRANCIS

TRANSLATED FROM THE "AUREOLE SERAPHIQUE"

OF THE

VERY REV. FATHER LEON  
EX-PROVINCIAL OF THE FRIARS MINOR OF THE OBSERVANCE

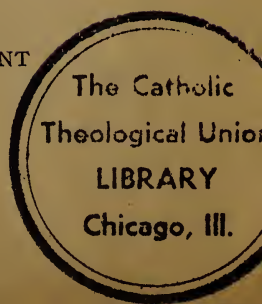
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OCTOBER 30.

*Blessed Angelo of Acri. Priest.*

[1669—1739.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchins.*

BLESSED ANGELO, who was the Ap<sup>o</sup>stle of Calabria in the early part of the eighteenth century, travelled about that province for the space of thirty-five years, evangelizing the towns and villages, and everywhere effecting a total reformation of morals. St. Leonard of Port Maurice and Blessed Angelo of Acri were, at that period, the two great missionaries of Italy, the first, in the north and centre of the peninsula, and the second in the province of Calabria.

Angelo was born at Acri, a small town in Calabria in the kingdom of Naples. His parents, who were honest and pious artisans, brought him up in the fear of God and the love of His Law. From an early age, the child gave tokens of the eminent sanctity to which he was one day to attain. He was modest and obedient, and delighted in prayer, being specially devout to the Mother of God. Everything showed that he was a soul prevented by the blessings of Heaven, on whom God had special designs.

At the age of eighteen, he left the world to take the habit of St. Francis among the Capuchins. But, strange to say, he did not persevere, and thinking himself unable to endure the austerities of the Rule, he returned home. His heart, however, found no rest in the world, and he made a fresh trial. This time again, he was so unfortunate as to yield to



the suggestions of the enemy, and again went back to the world. His uncle, who was a priest, thinking his nephew was not called to the religious state, tried to persuade him to marry, but the youth felt a repugnance for a life in the world and he resolved to make one more trial. For the third time, in 1690, he presented himself at the Capuchin convent, being then about one and twenty, and he was admitted to receive the habit.<sup>1</sup>

Angelo at length understood that it was to God alone that he must look for the strength which he did not possess of himself. The devil attacked him most<sup>2</sup> fiercely, but the novice, who now had learnt experience, prayed fervently, redoubled his austerities, struggled bravely, and came forth victorious from the strife. No doubt the devil attacked him thus obstinately, because he foresaw that this great servant of God would one day deal severe blows to his power and snatch countless souls from his grasp. As soon as Angelo was professed he applied himself to his studies with great success, but his heartfelt desire was to acquire the science of the Saints. Indeed his progress in religious virtues made him an object of admiration both to his Superiors and his brothers. Never was there a religious more humble, obedient, and devoted to poverty and severe penance. Prayer and contemplation took up all the time that remained to him from his studies. Angelo had for some years, to endure terrible temptations against chastity, but he employed his usual weapons, and had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, whom he loved all his life with a childlike affection. At length, our Lord rewarded his courage and perseverance, by freeing him for ever from the like temptations.

His superiors, on their side, thought it well to try him, in order to make sure that the spirit by which he was animated, really came from God. The Provincial, when he made his visits, treated him with severity, reproved him sharply in the refectory before the whole community, treat-

ing him as though he was full of pride and a hypocrite, and giving him public penances. Far from opening his lips to excuse himself, the servant of God readily accepted these humiliations and performed the penances with the intimate conviction that he was only treated as he deserved. His superiors, struck by such great virtue, held him up as a complete pattern of religious perfection.

When Blessed Angelo had the untold happiness of offering the Holy Sacrifice for the first time, he could not restrain the fire of Divine love which burnt in his heart. Tears streamed down his face, and after the Consecration he was rapt in ecstasy, which often happened on subsequent occasions. His superiors deemed it not right to let this light, which God had destined to illuminate His Church, lie hidden under a bushel, and accordingly, they desired him to prepare himself for the ministry of the word. Angelo preached his first Lenten course, in 1702, in the town of San-Giorgio. He had prepared himself to the best of his power, and had even carefully written out his discourse, but, as soon as he stood up in the pulpit, his memory failed him, he stopped short in the middle of his sermon and had to leave the pulpit. He tried again several times to preach but with no better success. Each time he was obliged to stop without completing his sermon. He was therefore compelled to give up preaching the course, and he returned to his community, sad and grieved to find that he was an unprofitable servant. After this failure, the servant of God earnestly prayed his Divine Master to make known to him His adorable Will. Whilst he prayed thus fervently, he heard a voice saying, "Fear nothing, I will grant thee the gift of preaching. Henceforth, thy labours will no more be barren." "Who art thou?" asked Angelo. At this moment, his cell trembled, and the heavenly Voice replied. "I am Who am. In future, thou shalt preach in a familiar and simple style, so that all may understand thy words." At these words, Angelo was seized

with fear, and fell down in a swoon. On returning to himself, he understood what God wanted of him. He burnt all his sermons, would consult no books but the Bible and the crucifix, and never again ascended the pulpit until he had first made long prayer.

In bestowing on him the gift of preaching, God granted him the understanding of the Scriptures, disclosed to him its most hidden mysteries, and bestowed on him the knowledge of how to make them understood by all, by the common people as well as by the most cultivated minds. When in the pulpit, ideas came to Angelo as if by Divine inspiration. He then received by infusion the knowledge necessary for the performance of his apostolic ministry and he did not need to have recourse to study.

Missionaries and preachers cannot, without tempting God, lay claim to this supernatural gift which he has bestowed on some of His Saints. Consequently, it is their duty to study, though, at the same time, they must not neglect the no less essential exercise of mental and vocal prayer. They should remember that the earth cannot be fertilised, unless the sweat of man is mingled with the dew of Heaven. Father Angelo employed a simple style, though dignified, in his sermons, which at first was only liked by the common people. Many persons of the upper classes ridiculed the missionary and his language. But God, Who had prescribed the style of his preaching to His servant, undertook Himself to silence those who laughed at him, and that, by the most terrible lesson. In 1711, Cardinal Pignatelli requested Father Angelo to come and preach during Lent at Naples, in the parish church of St. Eligius. The servant of God did not venture to accept the invitation, believing himself incapable of preaching in so large a town, and fearing to compromise the honour of his Order. But his Superiors obliged him to do so, and our Lord promised to assist him. Accordingly he set out, and on Ash Wednesday he went up into the pulpit. The man of God began his discourse in simple,



familiar, and unpretending language. The hearers looked at one another and smiled. On leaving the church they laughed much at the simplicity of the poor Capuchin. Next day the church was almost empty, and the following day there was not a single person present.

The parish priest was much vexed, and dismissed the preacher, also forbidding the sacristan to allow him even to say Mass in the church. Angelo bore this affront without saying a word, and departed immediately. Cardinal Pignatelli, when he heard what had happened, was much troubled at the conduct of the parish priest, and sent an express to Father Angelo begging him to return to Naples. The messenger came up with him at Torre del Greco, and brought him back. The servant of God again entered the pulpit, and, this time, he had a large congregation. All those who had laughed at him, flocked to the church, curious to see what the preacher would say after the snub he had received. Among them was a lawyer, well known in the town, who had made himself conspicuous by his ridicule of the holy man. The preacher spoke with his accustomed simplicity. At the end of his sermon he turned to the people, and in a prophetic spirit he exclaimed in a tone of sadness, "My brethren, say an *Ave* for the soul of one, who on leaving this church will meet with a fatal accident." The congregation were much surprised at this ominous prediction, and most of them on leaving the church openly blamed the preacher. Some spoke of him as a visionary, others as being very imprudent. The scoffers were beginning to laugh at him, when one among them fell down dead, struck by apoplexy. This was the lawyer, upon whom the Hand of God fell thus heavily. The report of this event spread like lightning through Naples. Everyone was forced to acknowledge the sanctity of the holy religious. The church no longer sufficed to contain the crowds that pressed round his pulpit. The preaching, which had been so scorned at first, now supported by fresh miracles, converted an immense number of sinners.

This station being ended, Father Angelo returned into Calabria, which was to be the future scene of his conflicts with, and victories over, the evil one. For about thirty-five years he laboured to reform this province. He went all over it, preaching in the cities, towns and smallest villages. The bishops unanimously agreed that this great missionary did great things in their dioceses by reviving fervour and restoring the practice of religious duties.

In his missions, Blessed Angelo preached the great truths of religion, and, especially, the Four Last Things. After each sermon, he made some pious reflections on the Passion of our Lord, and this, with so much unction and such lively sorrow that his hearers melted into tears. The most hardened sinners could not resist his words. They would break forth into sobs, and loudly deplore their crimes. At the close of every mission, the holy man erected a Calvary, composed of three large crosses, in order to remind the people of the truths he had preached to them, and, above all, that the remembrance of the sufferings of our Divine Lord might preserve them from relapsing into sin. No words can describe the pains and toils that he went through to bring back souls to God, nor is it possible to reckon up all the results of his zeal.

God worked many miracles by means of His servant, so as to give authority to his mission among the people whose guide he was to be. During his apostolic travels, Angelo cured all kinds of infirmities. He even restored health to persons at a distance who implored his assistance. He saw into the hidden depths of men's consciences, and many a forgotten sin, or a sin omitted through shame, was revealed by him to his penitents. On many occasions God made known to him future events, and, each time, the prediction came true. Blessed Angelo also had the gift of agility of body. Thus he travelled considerable distance in a moment's time, either to assist the sick or the dying or for the conversion of sinners. He was often raised from the

ground in his frequent ecstasies and raptures. At times a heavenly light surrounded him as he was preaching, and on other occasions a white<sup>1</sup> dove was seen hovering over his head. Several other marvellous facts in his life are mentioned in the acts of the Process of Beatification, of this great missionary.

About six months before his death, Blessed Angelo became blind. Yet every day he received his sight to say his Office and celebrate Holy Mass. Being warned that his last hour was at hand, he retired to the convent of Acri, where he peacefully gave up his soul to God, on the thirtieth of October, 1739. He was more than seventy years of age, and had been about fifty years in religion. Leo XII. beatified him in 1825.<sup>1</sup> His feast is only kept by the Capuchins.

<sup>1</sup> A life of Blessed Angelo of Acri was published at Rome, in 1825, at the time of his Beatification, and dedicated to Pope Leo XII. Our sketch of his life is extracted from that biography.

OCTOBER 31.

*Blessed Thomas of Florence. Lay brother.*

[1447.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

THIS great servant of God took the habit of St. Francis in the early times of the Observance, ten years before St. Bernardine of Siena, and laboured with great zeal in spreading this religious family throughout Italy. His father, whose name was Bellaci, was a native of Linari, in the Val d'Elsa, and had settled in Florence to carry on the trade of a butcher. In that city Blessed Thomas first saw the light.

His pious mother brought him up in the fear of God, but in his early youth he gave way to his passions, and with frightful rapidity sank into the lowest depths of sin. So wicked did he become that other young men of his own age shunned him, and were ashamed to be seen in his company. A rich gentleman of Florence, a thoroughly bad man, having observed that Thomas was of a bold and ardent character and capable of undertaking any kind of adventure, took him as his friend and got him to take part in all his sinful doings, more than once exposing him to the risk of losing his life. The foolish young man soon found out how despicable are such friends, and how little to be relied on in the day of tribulation. One day Thomas was accused of a grievous crime and was summoned before the judge, although he was in fact innocent of the charge. In this critical juncture his first thought was to ask counsel and assistance from his powerful friend. Twice he went to his house, and

both times he was sent away. At length he met his friend in the market place, and he said to Thomas, "If you want to see me come to me by night for I am ashamed to be seen speaking to you." At these words, Thomas flew into a passion, reminded him of all the services he had performed for him and left him in great indignation.

But God had His own merciful designs on the poor young man and brought him across one of His faithful servants, Angelo della Pace, director of the Society of St. Jerome, called *Del Ceppo*. The object of the associates was to encourage one another in works of piety and to labour at the conversion of others, especially of young men leading a life of vice. Angelo met Thomas Bellaci, and, observing his agitation, accosted him, asking him what was the cause of his trouble. Thomas replied, "For goodness sake, let me alone, for I am in despair." But Angelo persisted with great sweetness and charity, and Thomas, becoming more calm, said to him, "There is nothing worse than to have to do with ungrateful men. I have so often risked my body and soul for other men, that had I made as many sacrifices for God I should be another St. Francis." He then related his misfortunes to Angelo, who consoled and encouraged him, and begged him to come frequently to see him.

Thomas was struck by the example and advice of his pious friend, and soon began to feel a deep disgust for his past life and longed for better things. He broke off all connection with his former dissipated companions. Instead of wandering about the streets and public places, haunting taverns and gambling houses, he diligently visited the churches, assisted at the services and listened to the Word of God. He enrolled himself in the Confraternity of St. Jerome, fulfilled the pious practices thereof with great fervour, and strove to expiate his past disorders by a truly penitential life.<sup>1</sup> As the prayer of his Office says, "from a vessel of wrath, God changed him into a vessel of mercy."

<sup>1</sup> Don Razzi, pp. 694—695.



So fervent a soul could not long remain in the world. Great disorders entail great penance, and acts of deep depravity must be counterbalanced by acts of exalted virtue. Thomas could not find scope enough, so to speak, in the world, for expiating the sins of his youth and offering to God a fitting atonement.

About this time, the great Reform of the Franciscan Order by the Friars Minor of the Observance, had already been begun throughout Italy. Blessed Paul of Trinci held the office of Commissary General over those convents wherein the strict observance of the Rule had been restored by his exertions. Towards the year 1388, he sent into Tuscany, two religious, eminent for their learning and sanctity, Blessed John of Stronconio, and Blessed Angelo of Monte Leone, who first founded a convent at Fiesole, on the hills near Florence. Blessed John of Stronconio came to preach in Florence, and a large number of Florentine gentlemen and youths, won by his preaching and sanctity, left the world to put on the garb of poverty in the convent of Fiesole. Among these, was Blessed Nicholas Uzzanio, who rendered so many services to the Order in that province, and our Blessed Thomas Bellaci, who was received as a lay brother.

Blessed John of Stronconio had hesitated for some time to believe in the vocation of Thomas on account of his former scandalous life, but his fears were soon dispelled. Fervent as was the community at Fiesole, Thomas soon surpassed the most holy of the religious. His austerities were fearful. Thirsting after expiation, he embraced penance with all his heart. Watchings, hairshirts, disciplines, severe and almost uninterrupted fasts, were the means he used to efface the least vestige of his sins. He wore the cast off habits of others, the more worn out and the coarser the stuff, the better he was pleased. He would not even wear sandals, and he persevered in this kind of life until death, without relaxation.

Every other religious virtue shone in this loving and penitent soul, hence our Lord raised him to a very high degree of contemplation. In the evening, after a short sleep, Thomas went down to the church some hours before Matins and did not leave it until after daybreak. He sought the silence and solitude of the woods, in order to give freer vent to his sighs, groans, and loving aspirations towards his Saviour. Blessed John of Stronconio, his superior and spiritual guide, encouraged his attraction for solitude, and gave him leave to retire into the forest near the convent. Here Thomas would pass three or four days at a time, and here, while his body was chastised and subdued by penance, his soul was raised to the most sublime heights. Sometimes, even, his body itself left the earth and mounted to the tops of the highest trees in the forest.<sup>2</sup> Several times in the middle of the night he was seen surrounded by a bright light. God was lavish of his favours to a heart so eager to expiate by continual penance the sins of his youth. The prodigal child ever finds the Father of the family as magnificent in his mercies as in the days of the first Gospel preaching.

After having founded in Tuscany the convents of Fiesole, Cortona, Colombaio, and several others, Blessed John of Stronconio was named Commissary General of the Observance in Italy, on the death of Blessed Paul of Trinci. This was in 1390. During the first years of his charge he lived in Tuscany, in order to consolidate the Observance in that province, and took up his abode chiefly in the convent of Fiesole where he had established the noviciate of the province. Observing the rapid progress made by Thomas in the paths of sanctity, John thought fit to entrust him with the direction of the novices and newly professed, although he was only a lay brother. In 1397, he confided his own nephew, blessed Antony of Stronconio, to his care, who had just been professed in the convent of Stronconio, and was

<sup>2</sup> Don Razzi, p. 697.

only fourteen years old. Blessed Antony remained many years under his direction, and made such progress in perfection, that he, too, has earned a place on the Altars of the Church.

Blessed Thomas was most careful in examining postulants desirous of entering the Order. When once they were admitted to the trials of the noviciate, he instructed them in all the secrets of religious life, and trained them to perfection. His disciples were, for the most part, destined to preach the Gospel, and to evangelize infidel countries amidst untold difficulties. Thomas prepared them for all these trials, by initiating them into the practice of the most solid virtues, especially patience and humility of heart. He never ceased to instil into them the love of holy poverty, blind obedience, and purity of body and mind. He also enjoined fraternal charity, mortification, and mental and vocal prayer. After matins, he would not allow them to retire to rest, but made them spend the rest of the night in pious exercises.

He gave them frequent spiritual conferences and instructed them so thoroughly that eventually numbers of them became experienced guides of souls. With regard to manual labour, he employed them, at certain times, in working in the garden, preparing the refectory, washing the dishes, and other such works, he being always the first to set the example to others. When they were gathered together during their work, he made one of the novices read some spiritual book, such as the writings of St. John Climacus, of which he explained the obscure passages. On the approach of Lent and Advent, and on the vigils of great feasts, Thomas exhorted his disciples to sanctify these seasons of penance by contenting themselves with bread and water for their meals, and chastising their bodies by disciplines, silence, and long prayers.<sup>3</sup>

Such was the training given to the religious. from the first

<sup>3</sup> Father Morelli. Don Razzi.



days of the Observance, hence it may easily be conceived how this religious family has furnished the Church with a number of apostolic men famed for holiness and miracles.

The reputation of the holy man spread through Tuscany. The religious trained in his school diffused everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ. A number of Conventuals, and among them doctors of theology and learned men, passed over to the Observance, and placed themselves under his direction to learn from him the science of perfect self-renunciation. St. Bernardine of Siena and other superiors sent subjects to be formed to religious perfection by him. Thomas being now unequal to the duties of his charge, took his beloved disciple Blessed Antony of Stronconio to help him as second master of novices, and especially confided to him the direction of the novices destined for the priesthood.<sup>4</sup>

About the year 1414, Blessed John of Stronconio, Commissary General of the Observance in Italy, left Tuscany, and appointing Blessed Nicholas Uzzanio, Provincial, went to Naples, to found some communities of the Observance. He chose Thomas of Florence with several of the most fervent religious for his companions. Convents were founded at San Giuliano, near Aquila, and in several other towns in the Abruzzi. John of Stronconio erected these into a province which was governed by a Commissary or Provincial. He next went to Calabria, where he founded another province, and appointed Thomas of Florence to govern it. John of Stronconio afterwards went into Apulia and died at Nocera, in 1418, after having achieved immense labours for the spread of the Observance, and been famous for his virtues and miracles. From time immemorial, he has enjoyed the title of *Blessed*, but there is no feast kept in his honour. St. Bernardine of Siena succeeded him, in 1421, in the government of the Observance. Thomas spent some years, in introducing the Observance into

<sup>4</sup> Father Monti, in the life of Blessed Antony of Stronconio.

Calabria. He founded many convents, and our Lord gave authority to his mission by miracles. About 1420, he returned to Tuscany, where fresh labours awaited him for the extension of his religious family and for the good of the Church. About this time the "*Fratricelli*," who had greatly increased in Italy at the period of the great Western schism, were spreading everywhere the poison of their detestable doctrines. They went all over the Peninsula, drawing numbers after them and scandalising the people by their disorders. Blessed Paul of Trinci had unmasked them at Perugia in a public dispute and they had been driven out of that city. But it was an obstinate sect, and when they were exterminated in one country, they re-appeared in another. On being banished from Perugia, the *Fratricelli* spread themselves through the Republic of Siena and the states of the Lord of Piombino.

On his return to Tuscany, Thomas was deeply concerned to see the grievous injury done by these heretics to the Church of God and to civil society in the province, and he spoke of this to Martin V., who was at Florence, in 1420. The Pope saw the necessity of repressing error and putting an end to all these excesses. Accordingly, he gave Thomas full powers to oppose the *Fratricelli* in Tuscany, and authorised him to establish communities of his Order in the houses from which the heretics had been driven.

Thomas took for his companion his favourite disciple Blessed Antony of Stronconio, and at once set to work. He went through the territories of Siena and of the Prince of Piombino, drove out the heretics, and founded, in 1420, the convents of Scarlino, Radicondoli, and several others, wherein the spirit of St. Francis was revived, and the primitive Observances of the Order flourished anew. He devoted seven years to this laborious mission, from 1420 to 1427. The fatigues endured by these two holy men, and the insults and outrages which they met with from the heretics, were untold. But their humility, patience, austeri-

ties, and utter contempt for all earthly things, sufficed to unmask the hypocrisy of the sectarians, to cast odium on their disorders, and, at length, they gained a complete victory over them. Those heretics who obstinately persisted in error took refuge in the marches and in Calabria. Later, we shall find St. John Capistran and St. James della Marca bringing back these heretics to the path of truth, and, at last, purging the Church of this detestable heresy. The extinction of this hateful sect was the work of the Friars of the Observance.

Whilst he was engaged in opposing the Fratricelli, Thomas founded several convents of the Observance. In 1422, St. Bernardine of Siena had him named Commissary Provincial of the communities he had founded, by the authority of Pope Martin the V. Thomas established a noviciate in the convent of Scarlino, where he habitually resided, as this was a retired spot surrounded by a small wood, and consequently favourable for contemplation. In this holy abode, the servant of God received a number of novices, and among them were Conventuals, doctors, and men of high rank, such as Blessed Ladislaus, who belonged to the Royal family of Hungary, and Blessed Polidoro, a Roman, of the senatorial family of the Patrizi, who had been governor of several towns. He entrusted the direction of the noviciate at Scarlino, to Blessed Antony of Stronconio, and spared no pains to make this place a sanctuary of every virtue, and the abode of poverty, humility, penance and contemplation. From this holy house proceeded a swarm of Franciscan religious, who served the Church in the most heroic apostolic labours.

According to a custom established by Thomas in this fervent community at Scarlino, the religious used to go in procession, after Matins, to the neighbouring wood, reciting the Penitential Psalms. On arriving at a certain spot, each withdrew into his oratory, formed of boughs of trees, and continued in prayer until daybreak. Our Lord showed, by

a prodigy, how pleasing to Him was this practice. One night, during Matins, a wolf came before the church and began to howl so loud to call the other wolves that the psalmody of the religious was much disturbed. Thomas then went out, and said to the wolf, "Hold thy peace, I beg of thee, and hinder not the praises of God. Thou art come much too soon." The wolf obeyed at once and was silent. As soon as the community started to go in procession to the wood, as many wolves as there were religious appeared and escorted them, having become as meek as lambs. When the religious separated to go to their prayers, each was accompanied by a wolf which lay down by his side and never left him till morning after having received his blessing. From that time, the wolves came every night to escort the religious, and the marvel continued long after the death of Blessed Thomas. But one night, the religious having omitted the usual procession on account of the snow and cold, the wolves appeared no more.<sup>5</sup>

The servant of God received other signal favours in his dear solitude of Scarlino. He was often rapt in ecstasy in the forest and raised as high as the tallest trees. One day he saw a stag in the forest, and calling it to him, bade it attach itself to the service of the community to carry bread, alms and other things to the convent. The stag submitted to be saddled and bridled and became the servant of the religious.<sup>6</sup> The birds, the types of innocence among the creatures of the good God, would fly to meet Thomas and perch on his hands and shoulders to be petted and then would fly away again when he bade them. On several occasions the Providence of God came to his relief in his necessities. God likewise bestowed on this blessed man, whom love and penance had transformed, the gifts of prophecy and of insight into hearts, and worked many miracles by his means.

<sup>5</sup> Don Razzi, 701. Manuscript chronicle of Father Denis Pulinari.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



In 1427, the people of Corsica asked Thomas to send them some of his disciples, to establish communities of the Observance in their island and also to exterminate the Fratricelli. Blessed Thomas sent Antony of Stronconio with two companions. He himself followed shortly after, and remained in Corsica a whole year, founded many convents of the Observance, as has been said in the life of blessed Antony of Stronconio and made a foundation in Sardinia. He was the first Provincial of the Observance in Corsica.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas governed the convents of Tuscany, which he had founded, until 1430.<sup>8</sup> About this time, an attempt having been made by Martin V. to unite the Friars of the Observance and the Conventuals at the Chapter of Assisi, the Friars of the Observance gave up their Provincials for some time. Thomas, however, remained in his convent of Scarlino until 1439. On account of the long time he lived there, he is often called Thomas of Scarlino.

Heavy tribulations awaited the servant of God in his old age. In 1438, a General Chapter, convoked for the reunion of the Greeks, was held at Ferrara, and thence transferred to Florence. It is well known that on this occasion the Friars of the Observance gave striking proofs of their zeal. They were to be found everywhere, in the city where the Council was held, in Greece, Armenia, and Ethiopia, labouring to bring back the schismatic Greeks to unity. They went through all the Italian cities, maintaining the faithful in peace, and opposing the schismatical pretensions of the Conventicle of Bâle. Blessed Albert of Sartiano, had already concluded his first mission in the East. In 1439, Pope Eugenius IV. sent him as legate to the Jacobites, who were scattered throughout Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, and also to all other schismatics whom he should meet on his road. Albert chose for his companions and

<sup>7</sup> Father Morelli. Father Monti. See the life of Blessed Antony of Stronconio on the seventh of February.

<sup>8</sup> Father Denis Pulinari.

helpers, some of the religious of his Order, among whom we find Thomas of Florence, already far advanced in years.

The envoys of the Sovereign Pontiff set out in 1439, and early in the following year they reached the Island of Rhodes, whence they proceeded to Jerusalem. They continued their journey to Cairo, where the Sultan received them favourably, and even authorised them to go through Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, which were all under his government, with an express prohibition, however, against any relations with the Ethiopians and Indians. Disappointed at being unable to fulfil his mission completely, Albert visited the Jacobites in that country and held interviews with their Patriarch and other superiors. He persuaded them to desire the union of their people with the Roman Church. When he had reached the limits of the countries subject to the Sultan, he went further, regardless of the prohibition given him, managed to penetrate into Persia, till he reached the sea which washes its shores, intending to embark for Ethiopia and India. But his strength was exhausted by his many journeys and he fell seriously ill. He then confided his mission to Thomas of Florence, and set out for Ethiopia, with three other religious. As soon as Albert had somewhat recovered his strength, he again visited the Patriarch of the Jacobites, and returned to Italy in 1441, bringing deputies from that nation to the Council.

Blessed Thomas meanwhile set out with his companions, fearless of the dangers that might befall him. Twice the four religious fell into the hands of the Saracens. They were beaten, put in chains and condemned to suffer all the horrors of starvation. Each time they were ransomed by some rich Florentine merchants. Nothing could daunt their courage. They had now reached the frontiers of Ethiopia, and flattered themselves that they had attained their desired aim, when they were taken prisoners by the barbarians a third time. Flattery, alluring promises, threats, everything was tried to induce them to apostatise, but the servants of

Christ were above being tempted. The infuriated infidels, who were determined to make them deny their faith, beat them with rods, and shut them up for three months, in an old well, while for twenty days, they were left without any food or drink. When at last they were allowed some food, it consisted only of a handful of meal steeped in water. One of them, a priest, sank under the hard treatment.

The infidels themselves were struck by the heroism displayed by the friars. They put them in the common prison, and allowed Thomas to go into the town to buy necessities, on condition that he would return to the prison every evening. The servant of God, finding himself entrusted with the care of providing for his brothers, confessors of the Faith, took immense pains to alleviate their sufferings. Very often he was a butt for the ridicule, insults and ill-usage of every kind, on the part of the infidels, but all this was most welcome food to a heart consumed by charity.

One day he was cruelly beaten, rolled in the mud, and insulted in every way, and he returned to his brethren dreadfully bruised, but full of joy, calling on them to thank our Lord for having allowed him to suffer something for His Name. The others betook themselves to prayer and obtained the instantaneous cure of his wounds. On the following days, he went to the doors of the mosques, boldly preached the Christian Faith, confuted the errors of Mahomet, and declared himself ready to die for the religion of Christ. He was warned by an European apostate that the death of the prisoners had been decided on in a council of the Saracens. Thomas hastened to the prisoners, full of gladness, to tell the good news to his brothers. The confessors of the Faith thanked God a thousand times, and then they all confessed, and spent the rest of the time in prayer and preparation for martyrdom. But God accepted their good will. Blessed Albert of Sartiano, on hearing of their captivity, had informed Pope Eugenius IV. who at once sent the sum necessary for their ransom. It was a bitter disappointment



to these soldiers of Christ to be set at liberty just as they hoped to receive the martyr's crown, which they had so ardently desired, after their year of captivity. They set out again for Italy, sad and ashamed at not being deemed worthy to shed their blood for Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup>

The biographers of Blessed Thomas tell us of a prodigy which happened at the time of his journey to the East. It is well known that obedience governed his whole conduct. The voice of his superiors was his whole rule of life, and God was pleased to manifest by miracles how agreeable in His sight were these dispositions of His servant. St. John Capistran, Blessed Herculanius of Piagale, Blessed Albert of Sartiano, and Blessed Thomas, being on a visit to Cyprus, were entertained by a rich merchant named John Martini, who had a great affection for the Order. He invited some other merchants to dine, as they were desirous of meeting the religious. St. John Capistran, as Superior, bade Thomas of Florence prepare the repast.

The poor brother, who was by no means expert in cooking, boiled all the viands in the same pot, as Brother Juniper had done before him, and, consequently, served up dishes, the mere sight of which, produced disgust. St. John Capistran, much annoyed at this awkward blunder, on his host's account, called Brother Thomas to him, and severely chid him for having had the presumption to accept a charge of which he was incapable, and which he had fulfilled in a manner so vexatious to the master of the house. The Saint added, "In order that those hands which have done all this mischief may not remain unpunished, I command you, in the name of holy obedience, to bring us here, in both your hands, some burning coals from the kitchen fire." Thomas, without a moment's hesitation, went to the kitchen, and returned with his hands full of red-hot coals, and humbly knelt down before his superior, who gave him a second scolding. The guests were moved to tears, and implored the

Father Morelli. Father Denis Pulinari. Don Razzi, p. 705.



brother to throw down the hot coals, but Thomas did not stir till his Superior bade him take back the coals to the kitchen fire, wash his hands, and return to the room. He did as he was told, then came back and knelt down. St. John Capistran admonished him a third time, and told him to show his hands to the guests. Not the slightest trace of anything like a burn was to be seen. As to the repast he had prepared, the goodness of our Heavenly Father had provided for everything. Nothing could have been more palatable than the dishes, and the guests asked themselves in astonishment if this really could be the work of a poor religious, and not, rather, a banquet sent down from Heaven.<sup>10</sup>

On his return from the East, Thomas went to visit his dear Convent of Scarlino. From thence he went to Rome, where Eugenius IV. and the Cardinals received him with great reverence. From Rome he went to A'quila, to visit the tomb of St. Bernardine, whom God was glorifying by great miracles in the sight of all the people. This was about the year 1445. The servant of God visited also St. John Capistran, Vicar General of the Observance, and was sent to reside at the convent of Monte Piano, in the Province of the Abruzzi, afterwards called that of St. Bernardine.

Blessed Thomas spent the two last years of his life in this community, giving himself up entirely to contemplation and severe penitential exercises. The people sought him out, for they heard of his reputation and his miracles. As for him, he was inconsolable because death had not come to

<sup>10</sup> It does not appear that this miracle happened during the journey he made at this time to the East, with Albert of Sartiano, since at that very time, St. John Capistran accompanied by Blessed James Primadizzi, was conducting the Armenian deputies to the Council of Florence. According to Dom Razzi, (p. 699.), Blessed Thomas made another journey to the East, and went to Palestine with St. John Capistran and Blessed Herculanus and Albert of Sartiano. In fact, we know that these three great servants of God were sent to the Holy Land about the year 1429, to discharge a mission there. It is most probable that the miracle just related took place on that occasion.

him in Egypt, and he asked for a companion and set out for Rome, meaning to ask leave of the Pope to return to the East, where he hoped this time, at least, to win the palm of martyrdom. The holy old man stopped at Aquila, to visit, once more, the tomb of St. Bernardine. On arriving at Rieti, he was seized with a burning fever, and being taken to the convent in that town, he piously gave up his soul to God, on the thirty first of October, 1447. His body was buried in the church of the community, and striking miracles began to be wrought at his tomb. As the cause of St. Bernardine's canonization was then pending, the prodigies worked by Blessed Thomas incited many persons to ask that he might be canonized at the same time as St. Bernardine, and that, if necessary, the glorification of St. Bernardine should be delayed that the two great servants of God might be placed on the Altars on the same day. This would have made fresh delays, and fresh obstacles to the glorification of Bernardine, which St. John Capistran perceived, and to cut short these attempts, he went to Rieti, to the tomb of St. Thomas, and commanded him to leave off working miracles until Bernardine had been canonized. This child of obedience listened to the voice of his superior from the depths of his grave, for four years he worked no more miracles. After the canonization of St. Bernardine, at the command of the superior, miracles began again at the tomb of Blessed Thomas, to the great joy of the people of Rieti.<sup>11</sup> Devotion to him was sanctioned by Clement XIV. (His feast is kept by the Observance and the Conventuals.)

<sup>11</sup> Wadding ann. 1447. Father Morelli. Don Razzi, p. 708.

NOVEMBER 2.

*Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.*

THE Church, after having instituted a solemn feast to celebrate the triumph of the Saints in Heaven, has established another for the relief of the suffering<sup>1</sup> Souls in Purgatory. Yesterday, the Church militant honoured the Church Triumphant, to-day she labours for the deliverance of the Church Suffering. Yesterday, she implored for herself the prayers and suffrages of the former, to-day she offers her supplications for the latter. And it is certainly just that after having considered the glory enjoyed by the Saints in Heaven, she should exert all her efforts to increase their numbers, by obtaining a cessation of their sufferings and eternal rest for the souls which are still satisfying God's justice in Purgatory.

The existence of Purgatory is an article of faith, which has often been defined by the Church, especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. According to the holy Doctors, these souls suffer such pains that if their duration were not temporary, they would differ little from the sufferings of the damned. Hence Tertullian calls Purgatory a momentary Hell, and St. Augustine affirms that the fire of Purgatory and that of Hell are of the same nature, and differ only in their intensity and duration.

These souls which can do nothing towards their own release, appeal to our charity. From that desolate shore, whereon they have been cast by the shipwreck of time, they stretch out their hands to us, and seem to say, "O you who

pass along the stream of time see if there be any sorrow like unto our sorrow, or any more forgotten, more solitary, more forsaken." *O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus.*<sup>1</sup> They earnestly solicit the help of our suffrages, "Have pity on us," they say, "have pity on us, at least you, who are our friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched us." *Miseremini mei, miseremini mei, saltem vos, amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me.*<sup>2</sup>

Since God has given us the power of interceding for these holy souls, and of mitigating their sufferings and obtaining their release by our suffrages, let us respond to their touching supplications by applying to them the expiatory merits of our works of piety, charity, and penance, and let us assist them by our prayers, alms, Communion, Holy Mass, and the application of Indulgences. No act of charity can be more for the glory of God, more pleasing to our Lord, and more meritorious for ourselves. Moreover, when these souls enter Heaven, through our suffrages, they will not forget the duty of gratitude and they will intercede powerfully on our behalf before the throne of God. "When, by means of our suffrages, we deliver some souls out of Purgatory," says that illustrious daughter of St. Francis, St. Bridget, "we please their Divine Spouse, Jesus Christ, as much as if we had delivered Him from Purgatory, and in due time, He will plentifully reward us for this good work, and make it turn to our profit." The same Saint attests, in her revelations, that she heard a voice from the fiery depths of Purgatory, crying out, "Lord God, by Thy incomprehensible Omnipotence, give a hundred fold reward to those who assist us by their suffrages, and raise us up to the clear vision of Thy Divinity."

Practices for the release of the Souls in Purgatory, are, we may say, one of the traditional devotions of the Seraphic Order. This we find in consulting our annalists, especially, in the lives of our Saints, who were all so zealous towards the

<sup>1</sup> Lament. i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Job xix. 21.



holy Souls. We might bring forward a number of examples, if the limits of this work allowed of our doing so. And moreover, many of these examples are to be found in the course of this work. We will only record the exhortation given by our Lord to the disciples of St. Francis, through that illustrious penitent, St. Margaret of Cortona. Her Divine Master said to her, "Bid the Friars Minor, from Me, to remember the souls in Purgatory more frequently, for their number is incalculable, and scarce any one prays for them. Tell them, from Me, never to grow remiss in their life of poverty and retirement, or to meddle in worldly affairs, for if they do, they will be grievously punished in the next life."

St. Margaret was all her life full of charity and solicitude for the poor Souls in Purgatory. By her prayers, good works, and austerities, she delivered a great number, particularly the souls of her father, mother, and her pious companion, Gillia, who was condemned to a month of Purgatory on account of her too bitter zeal. On her death, a number of these blessed souls came to meet her, and escorted her into the eternal tabernacles.

Like their illustrious and holy predecessors, the disciples of St. Francis ought to redouble their zeal in behalf of the dead. They should be particularly faithful in reciting the offices and other suffrages which the Rule and Constitutions prescribe for the deceased members of the Order. Moreover, this duty of piety and charity will be rewarded a hundred-fold, by Him, Who has said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy." Negligence in fulfilling the Rules of the Order on this head, may entail upon them the most fatal consequences in the next life.

A manuscript chronicle of the thirteenth century, mentions two remarkable facts that happened in our Order. One is related by St. Bonaventure the other by Brother William, Provincial of France, under the generalship of the Seraphic Doctor. In this chronicle it says, "Brother Bonaventure



relates that one of our deceased religious appeared to another religious. The latter enquired of him as to his state, "I am in great pain," replied the deceased. "I suffer unspeakable torments, yet they are not eternal." "How is this, brother? Even if you had many faults to expiate in Purgatory, you would surely be delivered by this time, for all the religious, according to our custom, have offered many Masses and prayers for you." "It is true," replied the deceased, "but those Masses and prayers have not been applied to me. They have been more useful to other souls than to mine, because during life I was negligent in saying Mass and reciting the Office for the deceased religious when they were recommended to our prayers at Chapter, according to the custom of the Order, hence, by a just punishment, the suffrages offered for me have not been applied to me."<sup>3</sup>

Brother William relates the following incident in an exhortation addressed to the religious of the convent at Paris, requesting them to pray for a deceased brother. "One of our brothers," he says, "appeared after death to a religious of this Province, who was a friend of his. On being questioned as to his state, he replied that he was in suffering, and asked to be helped by prayers. "But," said his friend, "did you receive no benefit from the prayers offered for you by the community these last days, and the Masses said for you? "No," said the deceased, "I had made myself unworthy of them by neglecting during my lifetime to pray for the dead who were recommended to our prayers."<sup>4</sup>

The same chronicler cites a most consoling circumstance for the children of poverty. He says, "One of our brothers belonging to the Province of Saxony, on his return to the convent after preaching, was told that the Father Guardian and the Father Vicar had died during his absence. The following night, whilst this same Father was at prayer in

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript in the Vatican Library. (Section ottoboniana. No. 522 p. 228.)

<sup>4</sup> The same manuscript, p. 165.

his cell, he saw the two deceased religious enter clothed in copes of incomparable beauty and brightness, their faces, hands, and feet were resplendent with glory. 'How does it fare with you?' asked the religious. 'We are saved,' they replied, 'by the mercy of God. We who are now speaking to you, enjoy the Beatific Vision.' 'Have you not passed through the fire of Purgatory?' asked the other. 'We have performed our Purgatory,' said they, 'in the fire of poverty, for holy poverty is considered by God as a purgatory of expiation. Know then, that none of our brethren will pass through Purgatory, if they faithfully keep the Rule of St. Francis and holy poverty, because the crucible of poverty expiates everything. *Unde noveris, quod nullus, servans Regulam beati Francisci et sanctam paupertatem ejus, purgatorii pœnas sustinet, quia per caminum paupertatis omnia purgantur.*<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, we will relate an apparition that took place,

<sup>5</sup> The same manuscript, p. 224. Father Fodéré relates an apparition of quite another sort, which contains a terrible lesson. This apparition took place in the convent of Villefranche (Rhône), founded by some disciples of St. Francis, whom Guichard de Beaujeu had taken to France, about 1212. "It is said that a terrible vision was once seen in this convent," writes Fodéré, "which we only know through verbal tradition. Nevertheless, the good Father who gave me the habit, told it as a fact in all the convents when he made his visitations as Provincial. He related that the sacristan of the convent having risen shortly before midnight to be ready to ring the bell for Matins, went to the kitchen to fetch some fuel for the fire. Whilst he was there, he heard a voice reading in the refectory and chanting in the same tone and with pauses such as the reader uses when reading at meals. He went straight to the refectory, and there he saw a number of religious seated at table in their accustomed order, and he heard the one who was in the Guardian's place at the head of the table, ordering the reader to chant aloud three times the following words, *Propria voluntas, rerum proprietas-sæcularium familiaritas nos duxerunt ad tartara.* "Our self-will, possession of goods, and familiarity with seculars have taken us to hell." When he had repeated these words for the third time, the whole company vanished, and the poor sacristan fell fainting to the ground." (*Narration Historique*, p. 323.)

in 1859, in the monastery of St. Anne, at Foligno. We allude to the apparition of Mother Gesta, a religious of that community. This fact, which has been acknowledged to be authentic by ecclesiastical authority, contains a grave lesson on the subject of holy poverty. Teresa Margherita Gesta was born at Bastia, in Corsica, in 1797, of pious and wealthy parents. Her childhood was spent piously. Being miraculously cured by the Blessed Virgin of a dangerous illness, she promised that good Mother to consecrate herself to God in the religious state. Her prayers were soon heard. Canon Philip and Canon Stephen Barnabo of Foligno, having lodged with her father, when they were exiled to Corsica by Napoleon I., the maiden addressed herself to these venerable priests, to find out, by their help, a community whereof the rule would be suited to her vocation. They advised her to enter the convent of Franciscan Nuns of the Third Order Regular, at Foligno, the first founded by Blessed Angelina under the patronage of St. Anne. This convent is under the jurisdiction of the Friars Minor of the Observance, and forms part of the Seraphic Province.

The pious maiden took the holy habit in this convent, on the twenty-second of February, 1826, and after a noviciate full of generosity, she made her profession the following year, with such fervour that when the ceremony was over she remained a long time as if in ecstasy. From the day of her entering Religion, Sister Gesta was a perfect pattern of all virtues. Her fidelity in keeping even the smallest observances of the Rule was most remarkable. But her favourite virtue was holy poverty. This virtue shone forth in her cell and in everything she used. Her clothes, which were patched all over, were chosen by her from the cast off garments of her sisters. When she was elected abbess, the Provincial ordered her, in the name of obedience, to accept a habit which was not quite so old.

During the thirty three years that she lived in this con-



vent, the servant of God filled every office in turn. At the end of her three years as abbess, the very Reverend Father Andrew, then Provincial of the Seraphic Province, came to preside over the election of a new Superior. This venerable father, who is now living in the convent of Our Lady of the Angels, told us that he had wished to have her re-elected, on account of her great virtues and rare aptitude for government, but he could not obtain the consent of the nuns, who thought her a great deal too severe.

A sudden attack of apoplexy took this holy nun out of the world, on the fourth of November, 1859. Father Laurence of Solero, a Friar of the Observance, and confessor of the community, spoke these words in presence of the nuns, "I have not said anything about the supernatural gifts with which this mother was favoured, for God, if He pleases, will manifest them in His own good time." Three days after her death, plaintive and sorrowful cries were heard coming from the cell in which she died. This circumstance was not thought much of, at first, as it was attributed to the imagination of those who fancied they heard the sounds. But on the sixteenth of November a choir nun, Sister Anne Menghini, of Montefalco, on going to the laundry where she was employed, heard, as she went upstairs, a plaintive moan. She at once recognized the voice of Mother Teresa Margaret Gesta, who had been for a long time her assistant in the laundry. The nun, full of courage, was determined to find out what the noise was, and she opened the door of an unoccupied cell. Again she heard a moan but could see no one. She went into a second and a third cell without better success. But each time she heard a moan or a sigh.

Then somewhat alarmed, she exclaimed, "Jesus, Mary! what is the matter?" She had hardly uttered these words, when the mournful voice said with a deep sigh, "O my God, how I suffer!" On hearing this, Sister Anne Felicia trembled and turned pale, for she clearly recognized Mother

Gesta's voice. However, taking fresh courage, she replied, "And why do you suffer?" the deceased answered, "On account of holy poverty." "What!" said the sister, "you who were always so poor?" "It is not on my own account," replied the deceased, "but on account of the religious, to whom I have been too indulgent. If one thing is enough why have two? why have three? As to you, watch over yourself." At the same moment, Sister Anne Felicia saw a thick smoke, and the shade of the deceased going towards the staircase, murmuring words which the other could not hear.

On reaching the door of the staircase, the deceased said, in a loud voice, "This is a merciful warning, I shall not return again, and here is a proof of what I say." She then laid her hand on the door, and the impression of the hand remained there, as if it had been burnt in with a red-hot iron. The smoke then disappeared, and Sister Anne Felicia ran to the cell of the abbess, to whom she related all that had taken place, in presence of all the nuns who had collected there. They ascertained the fact of the impression of the hand of the deceased, and prayers were begun for her release.

Sister Anne Felicia, seeing that the community were so terrified, began to regret that she had spoken of the matter, and even tried to erase the mark of the hand from the door, but she could not accomplish it. At night she retired to her cell to rest, as usual, but first she said the seven penitential psalms for the deceased, and then she fell asleep. Now while she slept, Mother Gesta appeared to her, radiant with joy. Sister Anne Felicia said, "How is it, Mother Teresa, that you seem so joyful?" "Oh!" replied the other, "if you knew the relief I have experienced from the seven psalms you have just said before going to rest. How efficacious they are in the sight of God. They cry for pity and mercy, and they obtain grace and pardon from the Lord! I thank you, and I also thank the other nuns for the relief



they have obtained for me by their prayers. God, in His mercy, has vouchsafed to apply them to me. By a just sentence of that terrible Judge, I was condemned to the awful sufferings of Purgatory, for forty years, because I had been too condescending to the wishes of certain religious. But the prayers of our sisters have obtained an abridgment of my sufferings." Then, with a smiling countenance and sweet voice, she exclaimed, "O blessed rags of poverty which will one day be exchanged for a magnificent robe of glory! happy poverty! which procures such great honours to those who observe it! But alas! how many on account of poverty are lost, or suffer in Purgatory, because, under the pretext of necessity, so few know and appreciate this blessed poverty. In order to be truly poor, we must feel something of the effects of poverty, we must be in want of something, even of what is necessary. It is wrong and displeasing to God, to yield to the desires of those who are not content with what is necessary, for fear of giving an occasion of complaints and murmurs, for this leads others to be negligent on the score of poverty. Thus neglect of observance is gradually introduced into monasteries." Then she added, "You think you can efface the mark of my hand, but you will not be able to do so, even with the help of others. It is a mercy, it is a warning, and without this sign you would not have believed me." In conclusion, she said, "God is greatly incensed against men on account of all the iniquities they commit. The time is at hand when He will pour out over the world a vessel full of liquid of three colours, green, red, and black, and He will send great and numerous chastisements. As to you who are cloistered, you will suffer too, you will have tribulations and sorrows. But I will pray for you, and the Lord will have mercy on you, if you are faithful to your holy engagements."

On the nineteenth of that same month of November, 1859, the deceased appeared again during the night to Sister Anne Felicia. She was radiant with light, and told her she was

about to go and enjoy the delights of Paradise. "Be strong on the cross," she said, "and courageous in suffering." Then she disappeared.

On November the twenty-third, Monsignor Nicholas Belletti, Bishop of Foligno, drew up the account of this event, which was signed by the nuns. Then he had the tomb of Mother Gesta opened, and having applied her hand to the impression left on the door, it was proved, before all the witnesses present, that the mark exactly corresponded to the hand of the deceased. The door that bears this impression has been placed in a frame, under a glass, and is shown to visitors.<sup>6</sup>

The Church in recalling to our minds, this day, the dogma of Purgatory, wishes us to conceive a holy fear, and to exercise a continual watchfulness over ourselves, in order to avoid, not only mortal sin but even the smallest venial sins, which are so severely punished in souls otherwise so perfect and pleasing in God's sight.

PIE JESU DOMINE,  
DONA EIS REQUIEM SEMPITERNAM!

<sup>6</sup> This account is extracted from the written relation of the wonderful fact drawn up by order of Monsignor Belletti, Bishop of Foligno. It has been completed by information communicated to us by the present Superioress of the convent of St. Anne, at Foligno, and by the Very Rev. Father Andrew, ex-Provincial of the Observance, of the Seraphic Province, whom we met at Assisi, in the convent of Our Lady of the Angels. This venerable religious, when Provincial, had been in communication with Mother Gesta and the nuns of that community, which was under the jurisdiction of the Order.

NOVEMBER 4.

*Blessed Julian of Valle, Priest.*

[14th Century.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor.*

THIS holy man lived in the convent of Valle, in Istria, which now belongs to Austria. Bartholomew of Pisa is the first historian who mentions Blessed Julian Cesarelli. After describing the convent of Valle, he adds, "Here is interred the body of the holy Brother Julian of Valle, whose feast is kept annually." Wadding (Vol. VI.), and other annalists of the Order, who make mention of Blessed Julian, furnish us with no more details than the author of the *Book of Conformities*. We do not know the precise date of his death, but it must have happened before the year 1395, when Bartholomew of Pisa wrote his admirable book.

The veneration paid to Blessed Julian dates from the fourteenth century, and has ever since continued uninterruptedly. In 1477 the people of Valle chose him for their patron. His feast is kept every year in that place with much solemnity. In 1793, Pius VI. granted a plenary indulgence on this feast. The relics of Blessed Julian at first reposed in the Franciscan church at Valle, but the religious having left that convent, they were removed to the parish church during the course of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Il castello di Valle, e il beato Giuliano Cesarelli, memorie storiche compilate dal P. Anton-Maria da Vicenza. Venezia, 1871.*

The present century has witnessed the reconstruction of the parish church of Valle, and on the sixteenth of October, 1882, the relics of Blessed Julian were solemnly removed to the new church.

NOVEMBER 5.

*Blessed Raniero of Arezzo, Lay brother.*

[1304.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor.*

RANIERO was born at Arezzo, one of the greatest cities in Tuscany. He came of the noble family of Mariani.<sup>1</sup> Enlightened early in life on the vanity of earthly things, he took the habit of St. Francis among the Friars Minor in his native town, asking to be enrolled among the lay brothers that he might lead a life wholly hidden in God.

From the day of his entering religion, he took our Divine Saviour for his model, and resolved to tread in His footsteps, as far as is possible for man here below. Hence he advanced with rapid strides in the way of perfection, and like a faithful copy of his Divine Original, he became an example to all the brethren, of poverty, humility, obedience, and charity. Raniero spent long hours of the day and night in prayer. The conversion of poor sinners was the great object of his fervent prayers. But the more Raniero tried to live

<sup>1</sup> He is also called Raniero of Borgo San Sepolcro, because he died and was buried in that place. One writer has called him a Capuchin, from having confounded him with the Venerable Raniero of Borgo San Sepolcro, a Capuchin, who died in 1581. The ancient chronicles of the Order have given few details on the life of Blessed Raniero of Arezzo. He is mentioned by Bartholomew of Pisa, Mark of Lisbon, Rudolphus, Wadding, Mazzara, and in the Martyrology and Menologium of the Order.

unknown to men, the more was the Lord pleased to manifest his sanctity, by endowing him with the gift of miracles. During his life he cast out devils, and healed many sick persons.

In his apostolic travels, Blessed Raniero had for his companion Blessed Benedict of Arezzo, his illustrious countryman. He was also very intimate with Blessed Masseo, a disciple of St. Francis, and from him he learnt the circumstances which accompanied the granting of the Portiuncula Indulgence. He carefully gathered up the testimony of so venerable a man, and wrote it down for the benefit of his contemporaries.

Raniero died on the first of November, 1304, in the convent of Friars Minor, in the town of Borgo San Sepolcro, (*Biturgia*) a small town some leagues from Arezzo. His body, preserved incorrupt, is kept in the church of the Conventual Friars in that place. The numerous miracles worked at his tomb gave rise to a veneration which has ever since been paid to him, and was confirmed by Pius VII., in 1802.

His feast is kept on this day by the Friars of the Observance, and by the Conventuals.



## THE SAME DAY.

*Blessed Helena Enselmini. Virgin.*

[1208—1242.]

*Of the Order of St. Clare.*

HELENA was born at Padua; of the ancient and noble family of Enselmini.<sup>1</sup> While still young, she gave promise of the high sanctity to which she afterwards attained. The world had no bright attractions in her eyes, its riches and pleasures were a burthen to her, and her soul pined for the solitude of the cloister.

About the year 1220, St. Francis of Assisi, on passing through Padua, laid the first stone of the monastery of Arcella.<sup>2</sup> On that occasion, he gave the habit of St. Clare to Blessed Helena, then only twelve years old.<sup>3</sup> Helena was one of the first nuns received into this monastery. She was a perfect model to her companions, by her entire obedience, angelic purity, thirst for penance, love of prayer, and

<sup>1</sup> Bartholomew of Pisa, Gonzaga, Rudolphus, Wadding, and several other annalists and writers of the Order, mention Blessed Helena. Mariano of Florence gives her life in his manuscript chronicles of St. Clare. (P. II., Chap. xi.) A life of Blessed Helena was published by Ferrata, in 1812. We have followed the Chronicles of Father Mariano.

<sup>2</sup> The First Rule of St. Clare was observed in this monastery. The nuns, being obliged later to leave this holy abode, removed the venerable remains of Blessed Helena to the church of their new monastery.

<sup>3</sup> We read in the Sixth Lesson of the Office of Blessed Helena, recited by the clergy of Padua, *Helena illustriori Enselminorum genere orta Patavii . . . duodennis religiosum habitum a Beato Francisco humiliter suscepit.*

above all, for her tender and loving devotion to the Passion of Our Lord. She had the happiness to have for a guide and master in the way of perfection, St. Antony of Padua, the wonder of his age.

In the sixth year of her religious life, our Lord was pleased to make His faithful spouse pass through the crucible of long and painful sufferings. This state lasted sixteen years, that is till her death. She bore the trial with heroic constancy. In proportion as her illness increased, her soul, constantly united to her Heavenly Bridegroom, seemed to gain fresh vigour from her very sufferings. Indeed, in the contact with suffering, which gives our hearts to Jesus, just as Communion gives Jesus to our hearts, Helena became, day by day, transformed into the likeness of her Beloved. She seemed to be the clear and pellucid mirror, so to speak, which reflected His Image, so brightly did the joy of Heaven illuminate her brow.

God rewarded her courage and faithfulness by mystical visions. It was given her to have a glimpse of the splendour of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the glory of the elect, especially of the glory of her Seraphic Father. On the Feast of St. Francis, as she was meditating on the virtues and exalted merits of the holy Patriarch, she heard a heavenly voice saying, "Francis was powerful on earth, but in Heaven he is far more powerful."<sup>4</sup> Blessed Helena was surprised to see religious who had lived in community more highly exalted in glory than hermits, whose lives had been so much more austere. She was told that as religious had lived under the yoke of obedience they were much more conformable to Our Lord, Who, out of obedience, took our flesh and suffered the death of the Cross. Thus obedience made the actions of their lives more meritorious and pleasing to God.<sup>5</sup> This servant of God was permitted to visit Purgatory, where she saw the suffering souls relieved by the prayers and good

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript Chronicles of the Order of St. Clare, by Mariano of Florence, P. II., Chap. xi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

works of the faithful, and exulting with joy at the approach of their deliverance.

On the fourth of November, 1242, Blessed Helena was called to her eternal home. She was thirty-four years old, and had lived twenty-two years in religion. Her body has been preserved incorrupt till the present time, and numberless miracles have attested to her power with God. Innocent XII., in 1695, approved the veneration given her. Her feast is kept by the Friars Minor of the Observance and by the Conventual Friars.

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NOVEMBER 6.

*Blessed Felicia Meda. Virgin.*

[1378—1444.]

*Of the Order of St. Clare.*

FELICIA was born at Milan and belonged to the family of Meda, which was distinguished for its nobility and wealth.<sup>1</sup> Her parents brought her up carefully in the fear of God. The child was gentle, pious, modest, and docile to the lessons and examples she received. Her progress in her studies was no less rapid than her advancement in virtue. In a short time, she was mistress of the Latin language and of all the necessary knowledge suited to her rank. When yet very young she lost both her pious parents. This unfore-

<sup>1</sup> The annalists, Gonzaga, Rudolphus, Wadding, Cornejo, the biographer of Umbria, Jacobillo, and Mariano of Florence, in his Manuscript Chronicles of the Poor Clares, give us the life of Felicia. A biography of this blessed woman was written in 1724, by Father Antonio Maria Bonucci, and republished at Pesaro, in 1855. Some writers maintain that Felicia was born in the town of Meda, in the Province of Milan. Others think, with more reason, that she was born at Milan, of the illustrious family of Meda. (Angelati, *Degli scrittori Milanesi*. Vol. II., P. I., p. 906.)

seen stroke detached her more and more from the world, and showed her the nothingness and vanity of earthly things.<sup>2</sup> At twelve years of age she made a vow of chastity, and henceforth lived only to please her Heavenly Spouse. Towards the year 1400, she broke all the ties that still bound her to the world, and distributed her property among the poor, reserving however a portion for those of her family who were in reduced circumstances. Then she took the religious habit among the Poor Clares in the monastery of St. Ursula, at Milan.

The servant of God advanced rapidly in religious perfection, and was especially remarkable for her perfect obedience, rigorous austerities, and her diligence in prayer and contemplation. Felicia was tried by grievous temptations and had to go through fearful conflicts with the devil. Satan appeared to her under the most terrific shapes, as an Ethiopian, as a horrible dragon, and in the form of other monsters, the very sight whereof made her blood run cold. She was ill-treated, beaten, and, at times, left half dead, but full of humble trust in God Felicia had recourse to prayer. Her soul cried out unceasingly to God with the royal prophet, *Deus in adiutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.* The spirit of darkness was obliged to take ignominious flight, being unable to conquer the patience of the servant of God, or to daunt her courage.

About the year, 1425, the Abbess of the monastery died, and Felicia was chosen to succeed her by the unanimous votes of the nuns. In this office, she continued to perform the meanest duties in the house. She was mild in reproving, moderate when she had to command, compassionate for the weak and timid, full of tender care for the sick. Her maxim was to lead her daughters by the way of love rather than

<sup>2</sup> According to Mariano of Florence and other writers, Felicia had a younger brother and sister. When she became a Poor Clare, her sister followed her, and died four years after. Her brother joined the Friars Minor of the Observance.



fear, and to act with kindness and mildness rather than with severity. Thus, during her government perfect regularity reigned in the monastery.

In 1439, Princess Baptista Montefeltro, wife of Galeazzo Malatesta, Lord of Pesaro, desired, in concert with her daughter Elisabeth, to found a convent of Poor Clares at Pesaro, under the First Rule. "Having heard much of the sanctity of the Poor Clares at Milan," says the annalist Mariano, she first obtained a Brief from Eugenius IV. and then she asked St. Bernardine of Siena, then Vicar General of the Observance, to send her some sisters from that monastery. St. Bernardine, in compliance with her pious desire, sent Blessed Felicia an obedience which conferred on her the title of Abbess, and gave her an order to take with her to Pesaro, seven of her nuns, to begin the new foundation.<sup>3</sup>

On hearing that they were to lose their mother, the nuns at Milan were in the greatest consternation, and their grief, was shared by the whole city. All lamented the departure of this holy abbess, who had been forty years in the monastery, and had governed it so wisely for the last fifteen years. It was not without sadness, that Felicia left her dear daughters, but she restrained her feelings not to add to their grief, and courageously prepared to obey the command of her superiors. On taking leave of them, she comforted them and exhorted them to be assiduous in the practice of prayer and penance and to persevere generously in the path of self-sacrifice. Then, falling on her knees, she begged pardon for the bad example she had set them. Her sisters could only answer by their sobs and tears. The holy Abbess refused the carriage sent for her and chose to make the long journey on foot. She was received everywhere with marks of affection and reverence. When within half a league of Pesaro, the princess and her daughter Elisabeth came to meet her, and being unable to induce her to get into their carriage, they accompanied her on foot to the town, where

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript Chronicle of Mariano of Florence, P. II., Chap. xxi.



the servant of God and her daughters were received with great demonstrations of joy. Blessed Felicia lived four years longer. Though the time was so short, she left behind her in the community many nuns to whom she had imparted her own spirit and zeal for perfection. God honoured her with the gift of miracles, and the town of Pesaro was delivered, by her prayers, from the twofold scourge of war and pestilence.

Felicia slept in the Lord on the thirtieth of September, 1444, aged sixty-six, having spent forty-four years in religion. She was buried in the church of the monastery, and many miracles were wrought at her tomb. About the year 1810, at the time of the first suppression of Religious Orders in Italy, the bodies of Blessed Felicia Meda and Blessed Seraphina Sforza, who died in 1478, in the same monastery, were removed to the Cathedral of Pesaro. Pius VII. sanctioned the honour paid to Blessed Felicia, and Pius IX. permitted the Friars Minor of the Observance to keep her feast.

NOVEMBER 7.

*Blessed Bernardine of Fossa. Priest.*

[1420—1503.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

THIS illustrious servant of God was born at Fossa, near Aquila, of the ancient and noble family of Amici.<sup>1</sup> His parents sent him to Aquila for his education, and afterwards to Perugia where he studied civil and canon law. He tells us himself, in one of his writings, that St. James della Marca, when preaching at Perugia, gave him the habit of the Friars Minor, with the name of Bernardine, in memory of the great Apostle who had lately died at Aquila, and whose virtues and miracles had made him famous throughout Europe. Our blessed Saint entered among the Friars of the Observance, about the year 1445.

As soon as ever he was clothed in the Seraphic habit, the Servant of God took St. Bernardine for his model, and walked with great fervour in the path of perfection. He was the admiration of his brethren, for his meekness, humility, obedience, assiduity in prayer, and his rigorous austerities. Such was his love of purity, that he seemed to be an angel clothed in mortal flesh. As a reward and proof

<sup>1</sup> The life of Blessed Bernardine was written, after his death, by Father Antony Amici, his fellow-countryman and relative. The annalists of the Order, especially Gonzaga (p. 414), Rudolphus (L. I., p. 91.), Hueber (November the thirtieth), and Wadding, speak of this great servant of God.

of his perfect chastity, his body gave forth, as his biographers tell us, a delicious perfume of roses and lilies, which restored all sick persons who came near him. Being well versed in the law and above all in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, Blessed Bernardine was named missionary apostolic, and went through Italy, preaching in several cities and everywhere producing salutary results. He also preached in Dalmatia and Strigonia, where he spread the Catholic religion. God was pleased to confirm his words by numerous miracles, and our Lord Himself once appeared to him in the form of a pilgrim.

His wisdom, prudence, and skill in the management of business marked him as a fit person to fill the chief posts in the Order. He was made Provincial of the Province of St. Bernardine, and under him its religious discipline flourished exceedingly. At the General Chapter of Assisi, in 1464, Blessed Bernardine was sent as Provincial to Dalmatia and Bosnia, in order to restore concord among the religious who were divided on the score of nationality. His prudence very soon smoothed away every difficulty, and in virtue of the apostolic authority with which he was invested, he united in one single Province all the convents established in the two countries. On his return to Italy, he was promoted, in 1467, to the post of Procurator General of the Order, at the Court of Rome. Whilst he was in office, the servant of God never ceased from preaching or from working for the good of souls. The people of Aquila earnestly petitioned to have him for their bishop, and the Pope had even appointed him to the government of that church, but the humble religious entreated so urgently to be released from the dignity that his request was granted.

Blessed Bernardine closed his holy and laborious career at the convent of St. Julian, near Aquila, on the twenty-ninth of November, 1503, aged eighty-three, Blessed Vincent of Aquila saw his soul, radiant with glory, winging its flight to its eternal home. His body was interred in the church

of that convent. Later, it was removed to the convent of Ocra, where the faithful now venerate his tomb.<sup>2</sup> Leo XII. in 1828, approved the immemorial veneration paid to him. His feast is kept only by the Friars Minor of the Observance.

NOVEMBER 8.

*Blessed John Duns Scotus, the Doctor of Mary.*

[1274—1308.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor.*

ENGLAND, Ireland, and Scotland contend for the honour of being the birthplace of this incomparable doctor. He came into the world, it is believed, in the year 1274. At baptism he received the name of John. It was a suitable name for the new eagle whose gaze was to penetrate so far into the sublime mystery of the Incarnation of the Word. His parents were poor labourers who employed him in keeping sheep even before he had received the most elementary ideas of religion. One day, two Friars Minor, meeting him in the fields, begged him to take them to his father whose hospitality they sought. The child accompanied them to his father's house, where they rested awhile, and made a holy use of the time by teaching the little shepherd-boy how to pray to God. They were not a little surprised to find that the child, though perfectly ignorant of the *Our Father*, had no sooner heard it said once, than he repeated it without a

<sup>2</sup> This convent, which lies between the towns of Ocra and Fossa, not far from Aquila, was founded by the Friars of the Observance, in 1479. The community also possesses the tomb of Blessed Timothy of Montecchio, whose feast is on the twenty-seventh of August. Blessed Bernardine of Fossa has left several works in Latin and Italian. A *Quaresimale*, the *Lives of St. Bernardine and of Blessed Philip of Aquila*, etc.

mistake, and it was the same with the other prayers which they took pleasure in teaching him. The friars were delighted with the good abilities displayed by this hitherto untaught child, and proposed to his parents to take him with them to educate him in their community. Their offer was accepted, and John Scotus left his flocks to follow them.

Young Scotus made rapid progress in knowledge and virtue under the Friars Minor. He even surpassed the expectations of his masters. When he reached the age at which he could receive the holy habit, he obtained admission into the Order. His greatest wish was now accomplished, and from that day he became a bright example to his brothers. He was soon set to study philosophy. But, strange to say, notwithstanding his good will and hard study, he could not succeed in mastering the smallest proposition. His understanding seemed completely to fail him. In this extremity, he had recourse to our Lady, for whom he had the most childlike devotion, and implored her help with persevering ardour, begging her to disperse the clouds which had come over his mind. One day, having fallen asleep under a tree in the garden, the Mother of God appeared to him in a dream, she encouraged him to go on with his studies, promising him that he should master all the mysteries of sacred science. In return, she asked him to make use of his science only to promote her glory and to defend her privileges.

When Scotus awoke, he thanked our Blessed Lady, and promised to devote himself to her glory and to defending her prerogatives. Dating from this hour, all his difficulties vanished. Mary had dowered him with a quick understanding, a penetrating mind, profound sagacity. He seemed to possess infused knowledge, to the great astonishment of his masters and fellow students. His superiors sent him to study theology at the University of Oxford. His master was the famous Franciscan, William Varron, surnamed "the incomparable doctor, the light of Holy Church."



The master soon recognized in his disciple one of the great minds which God sends to His Church.

In 1293, Scotus, then only nineteen, took his doctor's degree, and he was given a professor's chair at the University. Three years later, William Varron was sent to the University of Paris, and Duns Scotus succeeded him at Oxford, as professor of theology. His teaching had such success that in a few years time thirty thousand students flocked to his lectures. Even distinguished professors gave up their pupils to come and hear him and become his disciples. The fame of the young doctor spread throughout Europe. Scotus was not only a great doctor, he was also a saint. God gave him to His Church to enlighten it by his virtues as well as by his learning. He was a faithful follower of St. Francis, and kept the Rule with scrupulous fidelity. His habit was poor, coarse and patched. On his travels he would never ride, he walked barefoot and begged his bread from door to door. Like all the saints he led an austere and penitential life. After taking a very short rest, his nights were divided between prayer and study. His love of purity was shown in his modest manner, the fewness of his words, in his careful guard over, and mortification of, his senses. It was but fitting that he whom the Queen of Angels had chosen for her doctor should be singularly pure of heart.

The virtues of the blessed man were founded on a sincere contempt for himself. It may even be said that his humility surpassed his learning. Amid the applause lavished upon him by thousands of followers he was always humble. He referred back to God all the honour of his success and merely looked upon himself as an instrument in His Hands to be used for the glorification of His Holy Mother. He taught that human reason should submit with respect to the authority of the Church. Therefore, when he developed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the schools, and had received special lights from God on this mystery, yet he curbed the ardour of his devotion by faith, saying that this

privilege ought to be attributed to Mary, under the reservation that it had the authority of Holy Church.

The life of this great doctor was raised to a very high degree of contemplation, it was, so to say, a continual raising of his soul to the only object of his love, hence his study was a constant prayer. In his frequent ecstasies and raptures, the light of uncreated Wisdom shone upon him and illuminated his wonderful mind and unveiled to him the mysteries of faith, at the same time that his heart was enkindled with the fire of Divine love. In answer to the loving desire of His faithful servant, the Infant Jesus vouchsafed to appear to him with His Holy Mother, and to repose in his arms. This ineffable vision left his soul plunged in a sea of delight. The fruit of his burning love of God was an unwearied zeal for the salvation of souls. As soon as he was raised to the priesthood, the young doctor began to preach. Notwithstanding the vigils and incessant fatigues entailed both by teaching and the admirable writings which he published, not a single Sunday or feast day passed that he did not preach the Word of God to the faithful. His eloquence was marvellous, it was both pathetic and impassioned. He knew the way to make his sermons, with all their weighty doctrine, understood by the ignorant as well as the learned, so that crowds flocked round his pulpit to hear the words of life which flowed from his lips.

An Augustinian monk, a professor in the convent at Ryssel, in a panegyric on Duns Scotus, printed by authority of the Universities of Louvain and Douai, relates the following incident. "Our Lord showed by miraculous signs how pleasing to Him were the labours of His servant for the salvation of souls. One day, when he was preaching at Oxford before so large a congregation that he could not be seen by everyone, the pulpit was lifted up by the hand of God high enough for all to see and hear the preacher. All those present, astounded at the prodigy, listened to his words as if he had been an Angel from Heaven.

The great doctor loved to teach the mysteries of faith to the simple and to little ones, his love for souls made him use every pious ingenuity to bring them back to God. One day when he was walking near Oxford he came across a labourer who was blaspheming the Name of God, while he was at the same time, sowing seed in the ground. "My friend," said the blessed man, "why should you not sow for eternity by offering your toil and trouble to God, instead of losing your soul for ever by your imprecations?" The peasant replied that he did not trouble himself about his lot for eternity, because if God had predestinated him to glory his salvation was secure, but if God foresaw that he would be damned nothing he could do would alter the decree of his reprobation. "If God," answered the blessed man, "does everything, as you think, in an irrevocable manner and of necessity, why do you take the trouble of digging and sowing? Whether you dig or do not dig, whether you sow or do not sow, if God foresees that this field will yield a good crop, He will give it though you should stand with folded arms. Whereas if God, on the contrary, foresees that it will yield nothing, your work will do nothing towards it. Whichever way it is, therefore, your work is useless and you are wasting your time." The labourer saw his mistake, and promised to mend his ways and to lead a Christian life in future.

We have already said that our Blessed Lady had chosen Duns Scotus to be the defender of her privileges. It was at the University of Oxford, that the young doctor first put forward his famous thesis in honour of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a thesis which will ever be the most beautiful gem in his crown. This teaching was welcomed with enthusiasm, and the University of Oxford awarded the glorious title of Doctor of Mary, *Doctor Marianus*, to the humble son of St. Francis. The teaching of the young Oxford doctor made proselytes, not only in England, but in France, and in other countries of Christendom. His talents, his immense learning, the wonderful vigour of his language,

drew round his pulpit a very great number of foreigners, who carried back to their own country and there spread the opinions of their master. The theologians of the Seraphic Order, full of zeal for the glory of the Blessed Virgin, ranged themselves under the banner of Scotus and defended his doctrine.

Duns Scotus had taught for ten years at the University of Oxford with immense success. In 1305, he was at Paris, where the Minister General of the Order had sent him to occupy a chair at the Sorbonne, then the first University in the world. Here, again, the Doctor of Mary brought forward his favourite thesis, and won a brilliant victory for this great privilege of the Immaculate Virgin.

In the University of Paris the great question was eagerly discussed. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception had many enemies and formidable ones because of their talents and reputation. The Pope, moved by these disputes, desired that a public discussion should take place in this University, in presence of his legates. The Friars Minor, as the declared partisans of this privilege of Mary, appointed Duns Scotus to defend their thesis. On the day fixed for the controversy, a crowd of doctors collected, the assembly was most imposing. Duns Scotus, Mary's dauntless champion, proceeded with his brothers to the Sorbonne. Putting all his trust in God and in his glorious Mother, whose prerogatives he was about to defend, he knelt before a statue of the Immaculate Virgin, and addressed to her this humble prayer, *Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata. Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.* "Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, O sacred Virgin. Give me strength against thine enemies!" And behold the statue of Mary bent gently towards him, as if to show that his prayer was heard. From that time, the miraculous statue kept this posture, so as to hand down to centuries to come, this proof of the motherly love of Mary for her faithful servant.

Scotus presented himself before the illustrious assembly



encouraged by this pledge of the protection of Heaven. When he appeared in the pulpit, everyone was astonished at his youth, and many thought it great presumption on his part to think of disputing all alone against so many doctors who had grown grey in the study of sacred science. Scotus stated the case in controversy with modest confidence, and then asked what there was to be said against this privilege of Mary. More than two hundred doctors rose in turn to dispute his thesis. When all had made their objections, Scotus spoke in his turn. He went over again the two hundred arguments brought forward by his opponents. With a really prodigious exercise of memory, he repeated them all, in the order in which they had been stated, he then answered them one by one, explained the texts of Scripture, and what had been quoted against him from the Councils and the Fathers, proved the true sense in which they were intended, and showed that they were not contrary to this privilege of Mary. There was no equivocal expression that he did not unravel, no doubt that he did not clear up, no sophism that he did not overthrow, no reasons which he did not refute triumphantly. Doctors, students, every member of the august assembly, listened to him in profound silence, admiring the vast learning of one from whom none of the mysteries of sacred science were hidden.

When he had reduced the arguments of his opponents to nothing, the Franciscan doctor put forward the arguments which prove the Immaculate Conception of Mary. He developed his thesis so clearly and so thoroughly, he sustained it with such weighty and convincing arguments that his opponents had nothing to answer. Scotus was silent, and waited. The silence which reigned along all the benches proclaimed plainly enough that the Doctor of Mary was victorious and that his opponents were defeated. The dispute was over, the legates rose, and a tremendous cheer rent the air, from all parts of the hall, in honour of Mary Immaculate and of Scotus, her invincible defender. The

humble son of St. Francis fled to hide himself in his convent so as to escape the ovation which awaited him.

The next day, the doctors of the University met, the legates presiding. A resolution was passed, to the effect that the doctrine of Scotus concerning the Immaculate Conception should be taught in the University of Paris, that the feast thereof should be celebrated every year with great pomp, and that the title of "The Subtle Doctor" should be awarded to Duns Scotus. Later on, it was enacted that no one should be admitted as a licentiate or as a doctor, who did not bind himself to teach and to defend the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. The Sovereign Pontiff wrote to the young doctor congratulating him on his victory and confirming the honorary title of "The Subtle Doctor" which the University had awarded him, to mark its sense of the piercing and penetrating gaze of this eagle who was the glory of the University.

Duns Scotus had been teaching for three years at Paris, when he received an order from the Minister General to go to Cologne, to occupy a chair in the University of that town. He was walking with his disciples outside the walls of the town, when the General's letter was given to him. After having read it, he took leave of his disciples, he would not even go into Paris again, as they pressed him to do, but set out for the town where holy obedience called him. He made the journey on foot, begging his way, and carefully avoiding making himself known to those who gave him hospitality. Thus giving an example of the most perfect obedience, the most complete detachment, and, at the same time, of the greatest poverty.

This prince of scholastic theology had not attained his thirty-fourth year, yet he was ripe for Heaven. It was but for a short time that the town of Cologne was to keep him, but it was to have the honour, at least, of possessing his tomb. On the eighth of November, 1308, this great light went out. It is not part of our plan to speak here of the

doctrine and writings of this incomparable doctor, to whom Bellarmine attributes boundless intellect, and whom others have compared to an eagle whose flight in discovering the secrets of God has never been surpassed. It is enough for us to say, that Duns Scotus was the first to teach in the schools the great prerogative of Mary, and if to-day we are allowed to proclaim Mary Immaculate, it is to Duns Scotus, after God and Pius IX., to whom we owe it.

Duns Scotus was buried in the church of the Friars Minor at Cologne. Later on, his precious remains were exhumed and placed over the High Altar. This church is now served by secular priests, it contains the tomb of Duns Scotus, who has been given the title of *Blessed* from time immemorial, either on account of the holiness of his life, or because of the miracles which have been attributed to him. The venerable Mother Jane Rodriguez, who died in 1650, at the Poor Clare convent at Burgos, had a vision on the day of the Portiuncula. She saw St. Francis going down into Purgatory to deliver the poor souls. The holy Patriarch held in his hand a banner, bearing on one side the emblems of the Passion, on the other, the picture of Mary Immaculate. He was accompanied by only one of his brothers, whom she knew by revelation to be Duns Scotus, the Doctor of Mary.

NOVEMBER 12.

*St. Didacus of Alcala. Lay brother.*

[1463.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

THIS Saint was born at St. Nicholas del Puerto, in the diocese of Seville, in Andalusia.<sup>1</sup> His parents, who were poor in this world's goods, but rich in those of grace, brought him up in the fear of God and the love of virtue. They had the consolation of seeing their child correspond from an early age to their watchful tenderness. As soon as he was old enough to bear the sweet yoke of penance, Didacus placed himself under the direction of a holy priest who led the life of a hermit in the neighbourhood. The youthful servant of God followed his master's example in this solitude, by practising the most severe austerities, prayer, and contemplation. When their spiritual exercises were over, the master and his disciple cultivated a small garden, and made

<sup>1</sup> Among the many writers who mention St. Didacus, we may cite the annalist Mark of Lisbon, and two biographers who have written his life in Spanish. In 1588, at the time of his canonization, two lives were published in Latin, one by Pietro Gelasino, Protonotary Apostolic, and another by Francesco Pegna, Auditor of the Rota and Consistorial Advocate in the Cause of our Saint. These two lives, from which Wadding has taken what he says of St. Didacus, are of great authority, because they were compiled from the Acts of his Canonization. The date of the birth of St. Didacus has not been given by his contemporaries, so those who have since written his life have only been able to form conjectures on this point.



wooden spoons, bowls, and other such objects, which they gave to their benefactors.

Meanwhile, our Lord, Who designed to call His young servant to a more perfect life, inspired him to enter the Order of St. Francis. He applied for admission among the Friars Minor of the Observance in the convent of Arizafa, near Cordóva, and was received as a lay brother. The biographers of the Saint tell us of his zeal for the observance of the Rule and Constitutions, his profound humility, perfect obedience, fearful austerities, and love of holy poverty. In a word, all the virtues which St. Francis recommends to his disciples, shone forth in Didacus with marvellous brightness. His life was a continual prayer. In his frequent ecstasies, our Lord imparted to him supernatural lights on the mysteries of faith. Doctors used to come to consult this humble brother on the most difficult questions of theology, and went away amazed at the depth and clearness of his answers.

It was in prayer that Didacus acquired that ardent love of God, and tender charity for his neighbour, with which his heart was all on fire. He would gladly have given his life a thousand times over, to put an end to sin, to make Jesus Christ known and loved, and to spread the Catholic Faith throughout the whole world, and procure for the Majesty of God that honour which is due to Him. We shall soon see with what zeal he devoted himself to the conversion of infidels, when in the Canary Isles. Full of compassion for the poor he used to share his meals with them. To help them, he would go begging, and when unable to relieve them, he shed many tears and tried to console them by words of inexpressible sweetness. Whilst he was porter of the convent, his brothers often reproved him for his too great liberality to the poor. The Saint modestly replied, that God never suffers those who are generous to the poor to be in want of necessities, and that alms bestowed for His love are a source of blessings. Our Lord often deigned to reward

his confidence by multiplying the bread in his hands in favour of the numerous beggars who applied for relief. One day, when he went to the door with a basket full of bread for the poor, he met some of the religious, who sharply reproached him for squandering the alms bestowed by their benefactors. The humble religious mildly replied, "But, look here, I am carrying flowers," and he showed them the basket, which to their eyes seemed full of flowers. Astounded at the miracle, they did not meddle with him again in his charities, and from that time held him in the highest veneration.

St. Didacus had a great devotion to the Passion, which was the usual subject of his meditations, and the mere remembrance thereof sufficed to send him into an ecstasy. His devotion to the Holy Eucharist was no less intense. Every time he went to Communion, he betrayed by tears of tenderness and joy the transports of love which possessed his soul. He honoured our Lady as his Queen, he invoked her as his Advocate, he loved her as his Mother, but his zeal did not stop here, he tried to kindle in other hearts the flame of love which burnt in his own for Mary, whose praises he never ceased to proclaim. He often healed the sick by rubbing them with oil from the lamp which burnt before one of her pictures, and so attributed the miracles he performed himself to the power of our Lady.

One day as he was going to Seville with his companion, Brother Stephen, they stopped at the house of a benefactor who was in the habit of giving hospitality to the sons of St. Francis. There lived a poor woman in the neighbourhood who earned her living by baking bread. She had a little boy of seven years old, who having committed some fault, was afraid of being punished for it, and hid himself in the oven where he fell fast asleep. The mother not being aware of this, began to prepare the oven for baking, she filled it with wood to which she set fire. The flames awoke the child, who screamed and called his mother. Hearing

the sounds of her child's voice coming from the midst of the flames, the poor woman was so horror-struck that she fainted. When she came to herself she was beside herself with grief, and ran through the streets like a mad woman weeping and imploring all those whom she met to save her child. By the permission of God, St. Didacus happened to pass just then, and enquired the cause of her great grief. Deeply touched, he spoke comforting words to the unfortunate mother, he persuaded her to go to the church, and to kneel before the altar of the Immaculate Virgin whose all-powerful assistance he promised she should obtain. At the Saint's words, the poor creature seemed to come to herself, and went to prostrate herself at the feet of the Queen of Angels. The Servant of God went at once, accompanied by his companion and a great crowd, to the oven, where, after a short prayer, he called to the child in the Name of the Lord, and the astonished spectators beheld the child come forth smiling, through the burning flames, safe and sound, without the least trace of a burn. The boy was led, amid the joyful shouts of the people, to the church, where his mother was still at prayer. The canons put on him a white tunic and solemnly consecrated him to the Blessed Virgin, who had saved his life at the prayer of her faithful servant.

The Canary Isles had been discovered about 1402, by the French knight, John of Béthencourt, who was accompanied on this expedition by two missionaries, his countrymen, Father Peter Bonthier of Saint Join, a Franciscan, and John Leverrier, priest of the Third Order Secular. The evangelization of the savage populations of this group of islands, successfully begun by these two apostolic men, was carried on by the Friars Minor of the Observance who went there in large numbers from Spain. These religious gave the first bishops to the new Christian communities. The first convent was founded in 1422, in the Island of Fortaventura, by Father John of Beza, Vicar of the Canary missions.

In 1445, the Fathers of the Province of Castile, met together for the choice of a new guardian for this community which was, so to speak, the central point of the mission. All the votes were in favour of St. Didacus, for the Fathers thought, with good reason, that the eminent sanctity of the humble brother, his known prudence and supernatural lights, would fully supply for the want of acquired knowledge, and that, on this occasion, there was sufficient motive for an exception to the ordinary rules, however wisely laid down, of never raising a lay brother to the post of superior.

The Saint was forced to submit, and accept the burthen laid on him by obedience. The hope of extending the kingdom of God among these barbarous people and of eventually gaining martyrdom, was his only solace in this grief. He was given Father John of Santorcas as his companion.<sup>2</sup>

Didacus fully justified the exception made in his favour. He governed his community with holy wisdom, made the seraphic spirit to flourish therein, and kept up the zeal of his brothers in the labours of the apostolate by his example. He would go and seek out the heathen, instruct them, and prepare them for baptism. His apostolate, it is needless to say, was exercised amidst untold hardships. But this was not enough for a heart all on fire with the love of God. His most longing desire was to suffer martyrdom. With this object in view, he embarked for the Great Canary Island, where the faith had not yet been preached. But God had other designs on him, and a violent storm compelled him to return to Fortaventura. There he continued his labours for the conversion of the infidels, several of whom he had

<sup>2</sup> Blessed John of Santorcas remained in the Canary Islands after the departure of St. Didacus. He led a most devoted life, completely devoted to the salvation of souls, and died at Fortaventura, after forty years of apostolic labours, in 1485. Numerous miracles were wrought at his tomb, and persons suffering from fevers and epilepsy often obtained their cure from him.



already brought into the Fold of Christ. God continued to prosper his zealous labours, which were moreover seconded by the sanctity of his life and the fame of his miracles.

In 1449, his superiors recalled him to Spain, and in the following year, 1450, he went to Rome on the occasion of the great Jubilee, and the canonization of St. Bernardine of Siena. St. John Capistran, Vicar General of the Cismon-tane family, had convoked the Friars of the Observance of both families to assist at these great solemnities. Nearly four thousand Friars Minor came from all quarters of the globe in answer to his summons.<sup>8</sup> There were present St. James della Marca and several other celebrated disciples of St. Francis, who were themselves to be one day placed on the Altars, for the Observance had revived the golden age in the Seraphic Order.

The joy of our Saint during his sojourn in the Eternal city may well be conceived. He must have visited the tomb of the Holy Apostles, the catacombs of the martyrs, and all the other monuments dear to Christian piety, with unbounded fervour. We shall only recall the heroic acts of charity which he displayed on this occasion. Among the concourse of religious assembled in Rome, several fell sick, either from the fatigues of their journey or from the effects of the climate, and a large infirmary was opened in the convent of Ara Cœli. Father Alphonsus of Castro, who came to Rome with St. Didacus, also fell sick, and the Guardian of the convent of Ara Cœli was so touched and edified at the affectionate charity with which our Saint nursed his companion, that he thought he could not do better than entrust the care of the infirmary to him. Didacus joyfully accepted this charitable work, and fulfilled it for three months, with such care, that his patients always had what was necessary notwithstanding

<sup>8</sup> Our annalists, especially Gonzaga, (p. 609.) tell us that the Friars of the Observance, to the number of 3,800, came from every part of the world.

a great dearth which desolated the city. God was thus pleased to bless the devotion and solicitude displayed by Didacus in serving his brethren. He miraculously restored to health many among them, either by giving them water to drink from the well which was on the spot, or by anointing them with the oil which burnt before an image of our Lady.<sup>4</sup>

On his return to Spain St. Didacus obtained leave to retire to the lonely convent of our Lady of Salceda, the first of all the convents in Spain, where the Observance was established. Here he was enjoying the delights of contemplation, when his superiors sent him to the convent at Alcala. In this community the servant of God passed the last years of his life, giving an example of the sublimest virtues and working endless miracles. Before his death, his name had become famous throughout the whole of Spain.

It was on the twelfth of November, 1463, that Didacus passed from this life of sorrows to the joys of a better life. He breathed his last while clasping the crucifix to his heart, and murmuring with his dying lips these words of the Holy Liturgy, *Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, Dulce pondus sustinet.* "Sweet the nails, and sweet the wood, Laden with so sweet a load!"

The body of St. Didacus was at first buried in the chapter house, and, on being taken up afterwards for removal, was found to be incorrupt. It was taken to the church of the convent at Alcala, where an immense number of miracles were worked through his intercession. In 1588, Sixtus V. inscribed his name among the saints. His feast is kept on this day by the Friars of the Observance and by the Capuchins, as a Double of the Second Class, and, on the thirteenth of November, as a greater Double by the Conventuals, and by the Universal Church as a Semi-Double. The Friars

<sup>4</sup> The well of St. Didacus and his cell which had been converted into a chapel, were to be seen in the convent of Ara Cœli, until 1885.

Minor of the Observance have a proper Office in honour of St. Didacus.

“Almighty and everlasting God, Who, by a wonderful providence, choosest the weak things of the world to confound the strong, mercifully grant to our humility that, through the pious prayers of blessed Didacus Thy confessor, we may be worthy to be exalted to unfading glory in the heavens.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Collect, Vespers of St. Didacus, Confessor.

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### THE SAME DAY.

*Blessed John of Peace.*

[1353—1433.]

*Of the Third Order.*

THIS holy man was born at Pisa, in 1353, and was a soldier by profession.<sup>1</sup> In a war between the Pisans and Florentines, most of his companions were killed by treachery, and John, struck by the danger he had escaped, resolved to consecrate himself to the service of God. But as he was bound by the ties of marriage and was thus unable wholly to forsake the world, he took the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, in order to labour after perfection in the midst of the world. From that time, John's life was entirely devoted to works of piety and charity. He chastised his body with an iron chain and other severe austerities. To him was due the institution of the “Society of Flagellants,” which existed at Pisa till the close of the last century.

This servant of God fell asleep in the Lord, on the thirtieth

<sup>1</sup> We have no other details about this blessed man, except the local traditions contained in the Legend of his Office.

of November, 1433. A magnificent tomb was raised over his remains in the cemetery of Pisa, and the faithful have ever since had recourse to his intercession. In 1856, his relics were translated to the church of the Conventuals in Pisa. The honour paid to Blessed John was approved by Pius IX. His feast is kept by the Friars of the Observance and the Conventuals.

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NOVEMBER 14.

*Blessed Gabriel Ferretti. Priest.*

[1385—1456.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

BLESSED GABRIEL was born at Ancona, and came of the ancient and noble family of the Counts Ferretti.<sup>1</sup> His pious parents took the greatest care to instil into him, from his

<sup>1</sup> The family of Mastai Ferretti to which Pius IX. belonged, is a branch of the Ferretti of Ancona. Contemporary writers have left us few details of the life of Blessed Gabriel Ferretti. St. James della Marca, by order of Pope Calixtus III., drew up the Process of the life and virtues of this great servant of God, but Benedict XIV. tells us in his *Treatise on the Canonization of the Saints* (B. II., Chap. xviii., n. 14.) that this precious document was nowhere to be found. Blessed Gabriel is spoken of in the annals of Mariano, of Mark of Lisbon, of Rudolph, of Gonzaga, of Wadding, in the Martyrology of Arthur and the Menologium of Hueber. All those who have written the history of Ancona, and Father Charles Gasparini, in his manuscript chronicles of the Franciscan Province of the Marches, have likewise mentioned him. We have two short lives of the blessed man, one, written by Father Vincent Mary Ferretti, Procurator General of the Dominicans, published at Rome in 1753, and at Ancona in 1754, it consists of forty-four pages only, the other, published at Ancona in 1844, by Father Stanislaus Melchior, one of the continuators of Wadding's Annals. We have borrowed from these two writers, and from the Process of Beatification of 1752, the facts which we relate about Blessed Gabriel Ferretti.



earliest years, the fear of God and the love of virtue. The child was docile to their lessons, and when quite young showed a great distaste for the world and a marked love for solitude and prayer. He had made great progress in humanities as well as in virtue, when, at the age of eighteen, he came to ask for the habit of St. Francis from the Friars Minor of the Observance, in the Province of the Marches. It is unknown where he made his noviciate.

Once enrolled in the family of St. Francis, his first care was to make himself forgotten, not only by the world but by his brothers. To live a humble and hidden life was his only ambition. Indeed humility was the special characteristic of this servant of God, and it was by the constant practice of this virtue that he prepared himself to become a docile instrument in the Hands of God for souls. His biographers also speak of his perfect obedience, his love of poverty, his scrupulous attention in keeping the very smallest observances of religious life, the happy consequences of the humility of heart which is the indispensable principle of the supernatural life.

As soon as he had finished his theological studies, Gabriel, who was then about twenty-five, was ordained priest and began his apostolic ministry. He evangelized all the towns in the March of Ancona, and a multitude of souls owed their salvation to him. His preaching was backed by his holy life and by many miracles, which are related in the Process for his Beatification. After fifteen years spent in the apostolic ministry, Blessed Gabriel was named Guardian of the convent at Ancona. This charge was made use of by him as an opportunity for serving his brothers with even greater humility than in the past. It was his delight to take upon himself all the lowliest and most troublesome duties in the convent, and to go begging from door to door for the wants of his brothers. His example, even more than his words, was an inducement to his religious to keep the obser-



vances of the Rule with strictness. When he commanded, it was with fatherly kindness, meekness, and prudence. The duties of his office did not prevent him from doing the work of preaching and hearing confessions as far as was possible.

The scholasticate of the Province being at the convent of Ancona, the good superior did all in his power to train the young religious to solid virtue by instilling into them the same love of our Blessed Lady which had filled his heart from his earliest childhood. He especially recommended them to recite the Franciscan <sup>'</sup>Crown, which the Queen of Angels herself had revealed to a religious of the Observance some years before.<sup>3</sup>

Our Lady showed by a prodigy how pleasing this practice was to her. Blessed Gabriel had desired one of the young novices, named Louis of Alba, to pay this tribute of praise to Mary every day before dinner. On one occasion, Louis forgot to recite the accustomed Crown, and Blessed Gabriel being informed of it, ordered him to leave the table and to go and repair his forgetfulness. The novice went to the church and said the Crown with the greatest possible fervour. Shortly after, Blessed Gabriel sent the brother who was serving to the church, to see what the novice was doing. To his great surprise, the brother saw an angel above the head of the novice, who was stringing on a golden thread, ten roses and a lily, for each decade of the Crown as the novice recited it. Astounded at the vision, the brother forgot to return to the superior, who sent a second and then a third religious, and as none of them came back, he went himself to the church, where he found all the religious marvelling at the wonderful vision. As soon as the novice had finished his prayer, the angel placed on his head this crown of roses and lilies and disappeared. For many years the fragrance of roses and lilies perfumed

<sup>3</sup> See the origin of the *Franciscan Crown* in the life of St. Bernardine of Siena on the twentieth of May, Vol. II., p. 264—265, note 10.

the church, our Lady thus perpetuating the memory of the prodigy.<sup>3</sup>

It may be imagined how the devotion of Blessed Gabriel to our Lady was increased by this favour. Mary, on her side, rewarded the childlike love of her faithful servant by appearing to him and conversing with him. Often, she appeared to Gabriel, surrounded with light, escorted by legions of Angels, and she vouchsafed even to place her Divine Son in his arms. It is not to be wondered at after this that this well-beloved child of our Lady, the Dispenser of graces, should have possessed in so eminent a degree the gift of prayer, and that in him the exercise of contemplation should always have accompanied the labours of an active life. Thus devotion to Mary brings *rest amidst work*.

About the year 1433, Blessed Gabriel was appointed Provincial of the Province of the Marches. This election was welcomed by all the religious with as much joy as it caused sadness to Gabriel himself, but he had to accept the burthen which obedience imposed upon him. His great anxiety was to make religious observance flourish among his brethren, especially in what concerned holy poverty. He visited the communities under his care regularly, he was the first in choir and at every exercise, and endeavoured to fulfil all the duties of his office. Under his government, vocations were multiplied, the number of religious were considerably increased, and Blessed Gabriel had to found new communities.

While he was filling the post of Provincial, Blessed Gabriel desired to make a pilgrimage to Assisi, to gain the indulgence of Portiuncula. He set out alone and on foot, clothed in a poor habit, and keeping his rank a secret, that he might escape the marks of respect which otherwise he would have been sure to receive. In passing through Foligno, he stopped at the Franciscan church attached to the convent of St. Bartholomew. While he was praying there, the Father Sacris-

<sup>3</sup> Wadding relates this miracle, Vol. X., p. 68., as well as the Process for Beatification made in the last century, p. 40., n. 54.

tan, taking him for a lay brother, bade him serve a Mass. Blessed Gabriel eagerly obeyed the order given him. But the Guardian of the convent having discovered that the server of the Mass was no other than the Provincial of the Marches, scolded the Father Sacristan for having failed in respect to so reverend a prelate. Blessed Gabriel came up as they were talking, and not only excused the sacristan, but thanked him most warmly for the honour he had done him. "To serve a Mass," said Blessed Gabriel, "is a sublime function which the Angels would consider themselves most honoured in performing, so do not blame the Father for having done me this honour."<sup>4</sup>

During the last years of his life, the servant of God was for a second time Guardian of the convent at Ancona. A certain religious accused him to St. James della Marca, who was then Provincial, of having failed in some duty belonging to his office, of something, moreover, which was of very little importance. St. James della Marca not choosing to let this fault go unpunished, wrote on the matter to Blessed Gabriel, and ordered him, as his penance, to say his fault and take the discipline in presence of the community. The servant of God performed the penance eagerly and gladly, then, wishing to testify his gratitude to St. James della Marca, for the wholesome correction he had received from him, he sent him a present with a letter in which are the following words, "As your Paternity undergoes great fatigue in travelling from place to place for the government of the Province, I send you a loaf of sugar, to give you a little strength, and as you have begun to build a convent at Monte Prandone, I send you a carpet which may serve for the church." St. James della Marca was much touched by these affectionate expressions, and reproached himself for having been too severe towards the blessed man.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Process of Beatification*, p. 42., n. 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Process of Beatification*, p. 42., n. 75. *Life of Blessed Gabriel Ferretti*, by Father Vincent Mary Ferretti.

Blessed Gabriel Ferretti ended his holy and laborious course at the convent of Ancona, on the twelfth of November, 1456. He was assisted in his last moments by Blessed George of Alba and by St. James della Marca, who afterwards delivered his funeral oration. Many miracles were wrought at his tomb and his body is preserved incorrupt to this day. Benedict XIV. sanctioned, in 1753, the devotion towards him. (His feast is kept on this day throughout the Order.)

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NOVEMBER 16.

*St. Agnes of Assisi, Virgin.*

[1198—1253.]

*Of the Order of St. Clare.*

BLESSED CLARE when she fled from the world, left behind her in her home, a young sister of fourteen, named Agnes. She was a soul of angelic purity, trained to the holy practices of religion by the loving care of her pious mother, and capable, already, of performing the most heroic acts thereof. Clare's flight, her complete renunciation of earthly joys, her courage in resisting the tender entreaties of her parents, all this contributed to stir the soul of Agnes to its very depths. She asked herself, if she, too, could not follow in the path of perfection, belong to Jesus Christ alone, and know and love Him only here on earth. This was not a mere impulse of the imagination, a passing idea without stability, but a thought inspired by the Holy Spirit, the voice of God Himself calling the young maiden into solitude. Sixteen days, therefore, after Clare's departure, Agnes betook herself to the convent of St. Angelo, as if to make a visit to her sister. She threw herself into the arms of Clare, told her of



her firm determination, and proposed herself as a companion to Clare, from that day forward, in her penitential life.

Clare shed tears, but they were tears of joy and gratitude. During the last sixteen days she had not ceased to plead to the Lord her God for Agnes, she had implored Him with all the ardour of her soul, with the most lively faith, not to leave her dearly loved sister exposed to the dangers of the world, and already her prayers were answered! However, a violent storm was coming upon the two maidens. The father's heart had been deeply wounded by the flight of Clare, and now that he heard of the resolution taken by Agnes his anger knew no bounds. Quite beside himself, he summoned his brothers and relations, told them of his child's departure, and asked their help in a matter where it was a point of honour that he should gain the mastery, though it should cost the daring and heedless fugitive her life. They rose as one man and declared themselves ready to make the rights of their family respected. Twelve from among them armed themselves, swore to drag Agnes from her convent, and proceeded to the convent of St. Angelo. Having been admitted to speak with Agnes, they appealed to her filial affection, to her well known love for her parents. They described their grief and despair, they implored her not to disregard their sorrow, to consider how young she was, how inconsiderate had been her conduct, and the facilities she would have in her home for satisfying her religious inclinations. But the young girl was unshaken in her resolution. She listened meekly to every thing they said, but she answered with firmness that nothing should make her go back to the world and its frivolous pleasures.

Then these men threw aside all pretence, and exclaimed angrily, "What right had you to come here? you shall leave this place at once and return with us to your father's house." "No," cried Agnes, in her turn, "I will not part from my sister." They immediately laid hands on the young girl, trying to drag her away, and as she resisted them, one of

them seized her by the hair, and, heedless of her youth, kicked her, hurting her cruelly, whilst the others pushed her and tried to carry her off with violence. Quite helpless against this brutality, Agnes called out to her sister, "Come and help me, dear sister, do not let them take me away from Jesus Christ, from my Lord." They had already dragged her down to the bottom of the hill, strewing the way with her hair, which they had plucked out in their fury, and with shreds of her dress, when Clare, throwing herself upon her knees, begged God to give her sister the victory. At the same instant, the persecutors of Agnes felt their strong arms give way under their slight burthen, they were forced to set her down, and their united efforts were unavailing to lift her up again. Some workmen from the fields came to help them, but the strength of all failed before the slight weight of a child. God had renewed in favour of Agnes, the miracle which He had wrought formerly for Lucy, the illustrious maid of Syracuse, who, strengthened by His right arm, withstood like an immovable column all the fury of the tyrants.

The relations of the Saint persisted, however, until their strength was completely exhausted, and even then their eyes were not opened. They were obliged to own their impotence, but they would not acknowledge the miracle, and began to jeer at Agnes. One of her uncles, named Monaldo, took his sword and prepared to strike her, but he was seized with a violent pain in his arm and the weapon slipped from his hand. Clare, full of superhuman courage, hastened to the spot and conjured her relations not to persist further. A feeling of shame came over them, they blushed at the violence they had shown to a poor weak child, and went away covered with confusion.<sup>1</sup> Monaldo, conquered by suffering, acknowledged his fault, and a little later on, asked his young niece to pray for his recovery. He was completely cured through her prayers, and became a most sincere

<sup>1</sup> Rudolph, p. 134. Wadding and the biographers of St. Clare, *passim*.

admirer of the nuns of St. Damian. The father of Agnes was himself convinced that the Hand of God was in it and gave up any further attempts to meddle with her.

Agnes returned to the monastery of St. Angelo with her sister, overjoyed at having been able to give this first pledge of love to her Lord. Her return was a real triumph, a triumph of grace over the world, of weakness over force. The two young maidens gave thanks to the Supreme Master, Whose charity had been so wonderfully manifested towards His children. When Francis of Assisi, then at St. Mary of the Angels, learnt the result of this painful struggle, he was filled with gladness and blessed the Lord. He, afterwards, took the two sisters to St. Damian's, where he gave Agnes the habit of penance and consecrated her to God.

The courageous maiden devoted herself with ardour to the practice of the most sublime virtues. She had offered herself as a victim to her Saviour immolated on the Cross, hers was a daily sacrifice, a sacrifice of every minute. She wore a rough hair shirt and gave herself up to the most austere penance. Her obedience was most exact, her humility proof against everything, her charity inexhaustible. Her converse with God often ended in raptures. One night, as she was praying quietly in a remote corner of the choir, she was rapt in ecstasy, her sister Clare saw her raised from the ground and with a triple crown shining on her brow. She was also favoured with a visit from the Infant Jesus, to Whom she had a most tender devotion.

Francis of Assisi soon recognized the rich treasure of virtue hidden in this privileged soul, and her rare aptitude in gaining souls. When the monastery of Monticelli was founded at Florence, he placed her, notwithstanding her youth, at the head of this community, and the result showed how well the man of God had appreciated the merit of Agnes. Monticelli became almost as famous as St. Damian's. Attracted by the example of the pious abbess, young women of the best families hastened to join the Order. Holy

poverty was practised there after the heart of the Seraphic Patriarch and of St. Clare. Agnes was also sent to North Italy to found communities at Mantua and in other towns.<sup>2</sup> She was at St. Damian's during the last illness of her dearly loved sister and assisted at the death of her whom she looked upon as a mother. She implored Clare not to leave her behind in this land of exile, but to take her with her to the abode of the Saints. Our Lord vouchsafed to grant this fervent desire. He allowed Clare a glimpse into the future, and she replied, "My beloved sister, it is the will of God that I should go, but as for you, dry your tears, for soon you will come and rejoin me with our Lord."

Agnes assisted at the triumphal funeral of the holy Foundress, and witnessed the miracles wrought at her tomb. The prediction of her blessed sister soon came to pass. She was called in her turn by her Heavenly Spouse, and her soul winged its flight to its eternal home. It was on the sixteenth of November, 1253. Many miracles were wrought at her tomb, and Benedict XIV. permitted the Order of St. Francis to celebrate her feast as a Greater Double. The precious remains of St. Agnes repose in a chapel of the church of St. Clare at Assisi.

<sup>2</sup> Wadding.



NOVEMBER 17.

*Blessed Salome, Virgin.*

[1201—1268.]

*Of the Order of St. Clare.*

SALOME was born at Cracow. She was the daughter of Lescon V., Prince of Poland. At three years old she was betrothed by her father to Coloman, son of Andrew, King of Hungary, and brother to the illustrious St. Elisabeth of Thuringia.<sup>1</sup> At this age she was taken from her father's house to the Court where she was to spend her life, so as to learn the customs of the country.

Prevented by the graces of the Holy Spirit and endowed with a good and quick understanding, she showed from her childhood a gravity and excellence far beyond her years, which gave promise of great things. Her mind took in without effort the lessons of her masters and her heart the sweet charms of virtue. Very early in life she was inspired to consecrate her virginity to God, and she constantly prayed for grace not to fail in her promise. The time for her marriage came, Salome was then thirteen, but nothing was changed in her life. God gave this privileged soul the same strength which He had formerly given to the illustrious Roman maiden, St. Cecilia, and she inspired the pious Coloman with the same thoughts that Cecilia had inspired in Valerian. From the first day of their marriage the young

<sup>1</sup> The annalists Rudolph (p. 141 and 142) and Wadding (Vol. III.), give the life of Blessed Salome.

couple made together a vow of perpetual virginity, and during the twelve years that they lived together they kept it with the most scrupulous faithfulness.

Salome and Coloman joined in prayer, mortification, vigils, and in the practice of every kind of penance. Salome, especially, was unwearied in these wholesome practices. Though her body became weaker, and her strength did not equal her courage, though the prince implored her to moderate a little the severity of her austerities, and to shorten her long prayers, she was carried away by the ardour of her soul, and in her sweet converse with God she was so transported out of herself that it sometimes happened that she would faint away. One night as she was praying thus according to her usual custom, she heard a heavenly voice, saying to her, *Consummatum est*, "It is consummated." The sacrifice offered with such fervour was accepted by her Heavenly Father, the union of Salome with Jesus Christ was consummated. She was no longer to belong in any kind of way to creatures, she was no longer to belong in any kind of way to herself. She understood it perfectly, and from this time she redoubled in contempt for earthly vanities and in severity towards her body. Having taken the habit of the Third Order at the hands of Father Adalbert, her confessor, she wore evermore the garb of poverty and penance. It was her delight and her joy to relieve the poor and to visit the poor neglected sick. Such striking contempt for the vanities of the world in so young a princess could not fail to have a good effect. A general reformation took place at the Court. The greatest ladies sacrificed their ornaments and amusements to give themselves up to practices of piety and works of mercy.

When the servant of God became queen, through the election of her husband to the throne of Galicia, she in no way changed her habits of simplicity and piety. On the contrary, she took advantage of the larger means which her new position placed at her disposal to extend and multiply

her good works. Far from objecting to her charities, her noble husband seconded them in every possible way. After twelve years of marriage, angelic rather than human, with Salome, young Coloman went to receive from God the reward due to his Christian and pure life. He died in 1225, while fighting gloriously against the Tartars in defence of his country and his faith.

Salome, now that she had become a widow, gave herself even more entirely to works of piety. She made use of her great riches to help the poor, to relieve the most hidden wretchedness, to build houses for the Friars Minor and new monasteries for the daughters of St. Clare. Some years after the death of her husband, in 1240, she gave up her States to her brother Boleslaus, and embraced the Rule of the Poor Clares in the community at Zavichost, afterwards removed to Scalen owing to the inroads of the Russians and Tartars. She lived about twenty-eight years in the seclusion of the cloister, where she became a pattern of penance, self-sacrifice, humility, innocence and charity. She filled the office of abbess for a long while.

Being warned by revelation that her end was drawing near, Salome called together her companions, exhorted them to mutual charity, peace, purity of heart, obedience without a murmur, and the avoidance of all worldly gossip. Moreover God made known by several prodigies that He was soon about to take to Himself His handmaiden. In her last moments Salome was gladdened by our Lady appearing to her with the Holy Child. Shortly after, the sisters who were round her bed saw a little star come out of her mouth and mount to Heaven. Blessed Salome had given back her beautiful soul to God. It was on the seventeenth of November, 1268.

According to her wish, her body was buried in the church of the Friars Minor at Cracow, by the side of the remains of King Coloman. God manifested the sanctity of His handmaiden by miracles, and Clement X. approved the

veneration which had been given her from time immemorial. (Her feast is kept on this day throughout the Order.)

“O Lord, Who hast united in Blessed Salome, the brightness of virginity with the contempt of earthly greatness, grant to us that we may serve Thee, after her example, with pure and humble hearts, so as to merit the crown of glory which will never fade.”

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NOVEMBER 16.

*St. Elisabeth of Hungary. Widow.*

[1207—1231.]

*Patroness of the Sisters of the Third Order.*

ELISABETH was born in the year 1207, her parents being Andrew II., King of Hungary, and his wife Gertrude, daughter of the Duke of Carinthia. At the same time a son was born to Herman, Landgrave or Duke of Thuringia and Hesse, to whom was given the name of Louis. The young princess was scarcely four years old, when the Duke of Thuringia sent a solemn embassy to her father, to ask the hand of Elisabeth for his son Louis. If their embassy were successful, the envoys were to bring the little child to the Thuringian Court, as was the practice at this epoch, in order that she might be early trained in the customs of a people of whom she would one day be the sovereign. Andrew acceded to the request, and confided his little daughter to the ambassadors, after making them magnificent presents. Elisabeth was given into the charge of a virtuous lady, to be taken care of and to be taught the pure lessons of faith.

The Thuringian Court was to witness the dawning virtues of Elisabeth. The house of God had a special attraction for the little child. She loved to kneel humbly before the



altar, and fixing her gaze thereon, to stretch out her little arms towards the Divine Presence in the tabernacle. Did her games or walks lead her by chance near a sanctuary, if the doors were shut, she would fall on her knees and press her lips to them lovingly. She kept herself faithfully in the presence of God, and trod under foot, for His sake, earthly joys and worldly vanities.

Elisabeth had for a playfellow, a sister of Louis, named Agnes. When the two young girls went to church, they wore golden crowns studded with precious stones, but as soon as they entered the holy place, Elisabeth removed hers and did not replace it until she left the church. Princess Sophia, the mother of Louis, was displeased at this behaviour, and asked Elisabeth why she did it. The young girl replied, "I could not appear arrayed in a gorgeous, shining crown, in the place where my Saviour hangs, cruelly crowned with thorns." This reply vexed the duchess, and from that time there sprung up in her soul a feeling of envy, of which, as we shall see, the Saint became frequently the victim. Moreover, it annoyed the duchess to see the child avoiding the Court festivities and taking as little part in them as possible, escaping from the long and idle conversations to aid the poor, and give wise advice to the young girls in her service and induce them to help her in her works of charity. "We must send her to a convent," she used to say sometimes, "she leads the life of the cloister here, and does not understand the dignity of her rank." These venomous words gave courage to the chief persons of the Court to say aloud what they thought. It did not seem to them that Elisabeth was sufficiently well dowered to become the wife of a Prince of Thuringia. "It would be better," they said, "to send her back at once to Hungary, or, better still, to marry her to some lord of the Court."

Elisabeth heard these remarks. She also noticed that the persons accustomed to attend on her paid her less regard and respect. She shed bitter tears, and then had recourse

to the Supreme Master and with humble fervour recommended her cause to Him. God did not desert her in the midst of her trials, He Himself was the Author of this union of two loving hearts. Indeed, Louis of Thuringia was worthy of having the Saint as his wife. He walked in her steps in the fear of God and in the faithful practice of the Divine precepts. He loved Elisabeth chiefly on account of her virtues, he admired in his future companion, her heroism, gravity, modesty, austere yet loving devotion, zeal for holy things, and her tender inexhaustible charity towards the poor. The young prince's noble heart understood these beautiful and touching virtues, and when he saw the Thuringian Court set against her he took her part boldly.

The marriage took place in 1221. The prince ordered extraordinary magnificence to be displayed on this occasion, wishing to show how much he prized the unappreciated qualities of his holy bride, and how much he scorned the insults of which she had been too long the victim.<sup>1</sup> Her enemies were silent after this. The wicked considered it prudent to remain silent. The name of the young duchess was in every mouth. Elisabeth did not allow herself to be dazzled by her more prosperous condition. Anxious to please God, she redoubled her austerities and prayers. She practised mortification every moment of each day. She limited herself at meals to what was indispensable to sustain life, and this with simplicity, without any affectation, or losing any of the sweet cheerfulness that belongs to the children of God. Always attentive to the wants of those present, she managed to turn attention away from herself by multiplied acts of loving charity towards others. She accustomed herself to rise in the night to resume her prayers and increase her mortifications. The prince willingly acquiesced in this sort of life. He thanked Heaven from his heart, for having bestowed on him such a virtuous wife. Yet Elisabeth in her fervour did not lose sight of the duties

<sup>1</sup> Wadding, Vol. I.

of her state. She cherished a very strong affection for her husband, she leant upon him as the protector of her innocence and the consoler of her sorrows. Louis was to her both a father and a friend. God blessed his humble servant, He rewarded the virtues of the Duke of Thuringia. Three children were born to them to add to the joys of their domestic life.

The characteristic virtue of our Saint seems to have been her tender and inexhaustible charity towards the suffering members of Jesus Christ. The poor were her friends and her children, and the more repulsive their poverty and maladies, the more she loved to serve them. One day a poor sufferer presented himself before her, his head covered with frightful wounds. Elisabeth took him on one side, cut off his hair, washed his wounds, applied remedies to them, and then allowed him to rest his head, weary with suffering, for a few moments on her breast. Surprised by some of her women, and upbraided by them rather bitterly, she accepted their reproaches with a sweet smile. Elisabeth had recognized in this poor man, Jesus, the outcast of the world for the salvation of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Every year, on Maunday Thursday, this Servant of Jesus Christ, herself washed the feet of twelve poor persons, and gave them abundant alms. On the same day she once collected together several lepers, washed their feet and hands and kissed their wounds. Elisabeth had always a special tenderness for these kind of sufferers. She never showed the least sign of disgust of them, she was never tired of exhorting them to patience nor of helping them with generosity. The pious princess imbibed this charity from the Heart of Jesus, through her love of the Cross and the Holy Eucharist. At Mass she seemed to be rapt in ecstasy, so sweetly was she absorbed in the contemplation of the Holy Mysteries. She could not sufficiently admire the Power, the Wisdom, and the Love of our Lord in giv-

<sup>2</sup> Wadding, Vol. II.

ing us this Sacrament, nor, at the same time, sufficiently esteem human nature, redeemed at the price of the sacrifice of the Cross, fed with the Flesh of God Himself, and a pledge of future glory given to it in the Sacrament of Love. The poor thus honoured, thus sanctified, were great in the eyes of the noble princess, they were worthy of respect, veneration and love. The lepers thus admitted to the banquet of the King of Kings, not as strangers but as children and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, could no longer be considered as the abject ones of the earth.

From the altar, this most blessed woman passed on to Calvary, there to contemplate again, God immolated for sinners, made as it were a leper, wounded and bruised and with no sightliness in Him, suffering unknown agonies. How then was it possible not to love the poor, not to cherish the sick, not to compassionate all the troubles which overwhelm our poor humanity? Charity springs from the Cross. And indeed, Elisabeth meditated unceasingly on the sufferings of our Crucified Lord. If she was admirable in her tenderness for the poor, it was because she was on fire with the love of the Cross, it was because she recognized in each poor person the image of God, born in a stable, living on alms and dying destitute of everything.

She extended her care, also, to the voluntary poor. The Friars Minor, lately settled in Germany, found a devoted protectress in the young Duchess of Thuringia. She welcomed them with respect, built them a monastery at Eisenach, the capital of the State, and chose from among them, a learned and holy director, in the person of Father Rodinger, one of the first Germans who had entered the Seraphic Order. The evangelic life of the new religious, all she heard related of their Father Francis, moved the generous soul of Elisabeth. She wished to become herself a daughter of the great Patriarch of Assisi. With the consent of Duke Louis, the Friars Minor admitted her into the Order of Penance. St. Francis had already



heard of the great virtues of the Duchess of Thuringia, of the benefits his Order had received from her, and he rejoiced over such a precious conquest. Persuaded by Cardinal Ugolino, St. Francis sent his poor cloak as a gift to his illustrious daughter, and the pious princess, long accustomed to venerate Francis as a friend of God, received it with feelings of lively gratitude. It was a treasure which death alone should take from her.

In the year 1225, the Duke of Thuringia was in Italy in attendance on the emperor, and famine was making itself felt in Germany. Knowing the generous disposition of her virtuous husband, Elisabeth considered it a duty to help all in need and not to leave any sufferers unaided. She therefore took whole families under her care, distributed food to them every day, and exhorted them to have confidence in the Providence of their Heavenly Father, Whose merciful Hand had more than once made Itself miraculously felt. As many of the poor, on account of their maladies, were unable to climb to the heights of the castle of Wartburg, Elisabeth established a hospital at the foot of the mountain, where they found a shelter against the inclemencies of the weather, a bed to repose upon in their sufferings, remedies to cure them, and nourishment apportioned to their needs. Elisabeth established two other hospitals in the town itself.

Every day she went herself to visit her dear sufferers. She questioned them all in turn, that she might be able to prepare the remedies required by each, to dress their wounds, make their beds, and render them the most humble services, and all this without showing the least repugnance, with a calm, loving, and tender bearing, like a mother in the bosom of her family. In one of these hospitals were collected a number of children attacked by various maladies. The holy duchess liked to make herself their infirmarian, to take care of them herself, and to do for them what even the most merciful charity might have shrunk from undertaking, so

frightful were the wounds which afflicted some of these poor little ones.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the poor maintained in the hospital, Elisabeth fed others in her own castle, and on several occasions it pleased God to multiply the food in the hands of His servant. Nine hundred persons were fed daily, either at the castle or the hospital or in their own homes. It was thus that the inexhaustible charity of their pious sovereign was shown. Neither were the poor of the provinces forgotten, Elisabeth managed to find out and assist those at a distance as well as those near at hand. The revenues of the state were, in her eyes, the natural property of those who were in want, she did not fear, therefore, to dispense them thus usefully.

However the heroic charity of the princess had not been able to live down distrust and envy. In the Thuringian Court there had always been jealous persons over whom her virtue had been unable to triumph. When the Duke returned from Italy, he was besieged with complaints from those who had the management of his affairs. To listen to them, it would appear that Elisabeth had ruined him by her charities. "My castle is still standing," said the Duke in reply, "allow my sister, (for it was so he called Elisabeth) to continue her good works. Bread will not be wanting as long as we allow her to give to the poor."<sup>4</sup> This answer silenced her detractors for a time. Louis of Thuringia showed himself worthy of his admirable wife, by his ardent faith, and the daily practice of every Christian virtue. He belonged to that strong generation of Catholic princes of the thirteenth century, of whom the king St. Louis was the perfect model. He had also, in spite of his short career, made himself a great name, and it was not his least glory to have understood the merit of Elisabeth, to have made himself her defence and her shield, and to have joined her name to his for ever. The presence of the duke, and his publicly known affection for Elisabeth, could not reduce the

<sup>3</sup> Wadding, Vol. II.

<sup>4</sup> Wadding, Vol. II.

envious to silence. New accusations were now made, under one pretext or another, but all showing hatred for the virtues of the princess. God took upon Himself to justify her and make Himself her Defender. One day a leper presented himself to Elisabeth in a deplorable condition. Full of the deepest compassion, she gave him a bath, washed his wounds carefully, and then put him to rest in the duke's own bed, he being then absent. The duke arrived unexpectedly and was soon told of what had taken place. Vexed and angry, he rushed to his room and violently tore aside the curtains of the bed. A man was lying there, it is true, but the leprosy had disappeared from his body, a holy light encircled his brow, an ineffable majesty was reflected in every feature, he lay nailed by his hands and feet to a Cross. It was the Leper that the prophet had seen in his holy visions, laden with the sins of the people, the Only and Eternal Son of the Heavenly Father, humbled to the death of the Cross. Louis of Thuringia remained speechless at the sight, his passion changed into an unutterable emotion, better than ever he understood the marvellous sanctity of his wife.<sup>5</sup>

The writers of her life tell us many other wonders by which it pleased God to ratify the charity of His Saint. One day as she descended into Eisenach, accompanied by her maidens, carrying meat and other provisions in the folds of her cloak, she found herself all at once face to face with the duke who was returning from the chase. Astonished at seeing her bending beneath the weight of her burthen, the prince wished to know what she carried. He opened her mantle himself. It contained nothing but red and white roses, the most beautiful he had ever seen.

The holy duchess was able to go on with her works of mercy for some time longer, without troubling herself about the ill-will of her detractors, but great trials were soon to fall upon her. The envious were to have their day of triumph, and this pure and heroic woman was to be plunged

<sup>5</sup> Mariano of Florence, Chap. ii.

into inconceivable anguish. As a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, Elisabeth walked in His footsteps, in humility, meekness, and tender compassion for the infirmities of mankind. With Him she was to climb the hill of Calvary, to drain the bitter chalice to the dregs, and to steep her soul in vinegar and gall. She was found worthy of being attached to the cross of her God, unreservedly.

In the year 1227, an army of crusaders, mustered through the influence of Pope Gregory IX., were ready to embark at Brindisi, after the feast of the Assumption, under the command of Frederick II., Emperor of Germany. The Duke of Thuringia was one of the first among the Catholic princes to take the cross. In spite of her grief at his departure, Elisabeth not only helped him in his noble determination, but accompanied him a two day's journey beyond the limits of their dominions. The hour of parting was unspeakably bitter, and the young princess wept as if a mournful presentiment weighed on her soul, and Louis himself had need of all his faith to carry out his sacrifice.

On his arrival at Troja in Sicily, he was received with the honour due to his rank by the Emperor Frederick II., whose dispositions had been so long uncertain that they brought the holy enterprise to nought. Louis of Thuringia was already attacked with fever before he embarked, but he did not consider his condition sufficiently serious to delay his departure for a few days. However his illness increased with frightful rapidity, and he received the Last Sacraments with a fervour worthy of a Christian hero. He saw that the time was come for him to quit this life, and, in the flower of his youth, he accepted the great sacrifice without a murmur or complaint, as if he had been on the battle field. He adored the inscrutable designs of the Supreme Ruler, put himself and all those belonging to him under God's Fatherly Providence, and fell asleep in the hope of entering that Jerusalem which the impure feet of the stranger shall never defile.



The duke died on the eleventh of September, near Otranto. The lords who were deputed to carry this mournful news to Wartburg, did not get there before the beginning of winter. Elisabeth had just given birth to her fourth child and was still ill. They were therefore received by the Duchess Sophia, whose love for her son's wife seemed to revive, and she forbade anyone to tell her of the sorrow which had come upon her, for fear of endangering her health. Afterwards, when she thought the moment favourable, she went herself to Elisabeth to perform this terrible task. The news was like a thunderbolt to Elisabeth, she remained speechless for a time, then clasping her hands, she exclaimed "O Lord, my God! My brother is dead, he is dead! With him the whole world is dead to me." And her tears and sobs expressed her inconsolable grief.<sup>6</sup> Elisabeth became a widow at twenty, after having been married about six years.

This was the beginning of her sorrows. A few days later, Henry, brother to the late prince, took possession of his states at the instigation of ambitious courtiers, and deputed some of them to go to his sister in law to reproach her for her works of charity, as if they had been so many acts of folly calculated to disgrace her family, and for her almsgiving, as ruinous extravagance from which the duchy had now to suffer. They were to inform her that in punishment for these faults, she was to be deprived of her possessions and of her castle, which she was to leave without delay. These hatefully cruel and flagrantly unjust orders were given in so merciless a manner, that the Duchess Sophia, indignant at the audacity of the courtiers, took her daughter in law in her arms, and exclaimed, "She shall remain with me, no one shall take her from me. Where are my sons? I wish to speak to them." All protest was useless. Elisabeth was not allowed to take away the smallest thing, she was forced to leave empty handed the palace that

<sup>6</sup> Wadding, Vol. II., p. 166.

had witnessed her glory and her holy works. In the court of the castle she found her children and two of her maids of honour, Guta and Ysentrude, who were robbed and driven out like herself. At the sight of her son's children, the grief and indignation of the Duchess Sophia became unbounded. She again demanded to speak with Henry and his brother Conrad. But the two princes had hidden themselves that they might not give way at the sight of the tears of their mother and sister in law. Elisabeth and her children were condemned to utter poverty. The love and affection of the Duchess Sophia for her daughter in law was revived never again to alter, but she had to content herself with weeping over Elisabeth and her little ones. Everything had been planned to effect her ruin.

Elisabeth, therefore, alone with her two faithful companions, descended on foot the path from the castle of Wartburg, which she had so often trod when dispensing her charities in the country round. She carried her new-born babe in her arms, the other three children followed, led by Guta and Ysentrude. It was bitterly cold, being in the depth of winter. The town of Eisenach, on which Elisabeth had showered her gifts, ought at any rate to have offered her some help, but orders had been issued that whoever should venture to receive Elisabeth with kindness would incur the displeasure of the new Landgrave. Eisenach showed itself worthy of such orders. All her services and all her kindness were forgotten, not a door was opened to the weeping princess and her four children shivering with the cold. Fear had frozen every heart. Elisabeth soon found out that in this place, where blessings had so often been called down on her, there was no one on whom she could rely. She went, therefore, to a miserable tavern, where the landlord consented to receive her. This man had only a stable to offer the duchess, whence first he had to drive out his beasts and then make ready for her as best he could. But no sooner had she entered the place than peace returned to her

soul, she was filled with holy joy, she was happy. It was indeed the abode of Bethlehem, such as she had had a glimpse of in her long meditations, such as she had been reminded of when visiting poor mothers whose poverty she had loved to relieve.

Having put her children to sleep, she continued to think over her new position without bitterness or repining, until midnight, when she heard the bells ringing for Matins at the Franciscan church. She directed her steps towards the house of prayer, accompanied by her two companions, assisted at the Office, and then begged the religious to have the goodness to sing the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for the misfortunes which had come upon her. It was her hour of triumph over the world and over herself. At the first shock nature had rebelled, and she had bemoaned herself under the humiliation, but now she was vanquished and fastened to the cross.

Certain charitable and reliable persons secretly offered Elisabeth to take charge of her children until better days should dawn. Fearful lest they might sink under the daily privation which was now their lot, Elisabeth consented to this sorrowful separation. They were therefore hidden in places at a distance from the town and unknown to their persecutors. Once reassured on this point, Elisabeth no longer felt that her poverty was burthensome, and she managed to provide for herself by the labour of her hands, like a simple peasant woman. She even stinted herself in her poor food so as to have something to give away. Insults and gibes were not wanting in her time of trial, and often these came from those whose poverty she had relieved. One day a poor beggar woman whom she had helped for a long time, pushed her roughly and made her fall into a muddy brook, then adding insults to her brutality, "That befits you well," she said, "you did not choose to live like a princess when you were one, lie there in the mud like a beggar woman and do not expect me to pull you out."

Elisabeth, without losing her patience and meekness, got up as well as she was able, and began to laugh heartily over her fall, saying, "This is to make up for all the gold and precious stones I used to wear," and she set to work to wash her garments in the water close by.

The Saint accepted everything that happened with thankfulness. She made no account of man's share in it, her Heavenly Father alone was, in her eyes, the Dispenser both of good and evil. In the days of her great affliction, her enemies triumphed, the world forsook her, and looked upon her as the most wretched of women, but our Lord Jesus did not fail her. He proportioned His consolations to the measure of the afflictions which had become the lot of His faithful servant. He manifested Himself to her thus, initiating her into the happiness of Heaven and inebriating her with the joys of the Angels. The Queen of Heaven herself often appeared to her, instructed her in the deepest secrets of the perfect life, and raised her to the most exalted knowledge of the Divine mysteries.

However the state of affairs soon changed. Matilda, Abbess of Kitsing on the Main, Elisabeth's maternal aunt, hearing from the Duchess Sophia of the unexampled ill-treatment to which the pious princess was subjected, instantly despatched some trusty messengers to bring her to the convent.<sup>7</sup> The princes did not dare to interfere, and Elisabeth was thus able, for a few days, to enjoy in peace the society of her children in this holy retreat. Soon her uncle Egbert, Prince Bishop of Bamberg, heard in his turn of the troubles that had come on her in her widowhood. It was not enough for him that she should be in the sanctuary of Kitsing, he made Elisabeth come to his own states, and offered to have her escorted back to Hungary. On her refusal, he gave her the castle of Botteinsten as a residence, with an income and household befitting her rank. Then, with her two faithful followers, she resumed her pious

<sup>7</sup> Wadding, Vol. II., p. 205.



exercises by day and night, and the castle became a house of prayer and good works. The bishop also wished his niece to make a second marriage, and she might have become the wife of the Emperor Frederick II. But her choice was made, God alone was to be her portion for evermore. She was unshaken in her resolution.<sup>8</sup>

The companions of Louis of Thuringia had brought back the remains of their beloved sovereign to Germany. On their arrival at Bamberg, they apprised the bishop and duchess of their return, and everything was arranged for the triumphal reception of the body of the great prince. The next day Elisabeth desired the coffin to be opened, the sight of which alone was sufficient to recall all her sorrows.<sup>9</sup> In presence of her husband's remains her deep and inconsolable grief was revived afresh. She shed tears and heaved deep sighs and was nearly succumbing to her unutterable sorrow. But at last she lifted her heart to God, and strength returned to her soul. She thanked the Supreme Lord of all things for all that had happened, she accepted with touching submission the death of her dear husband, which had been so grievous to her, and all the troubles which had followed.

The princes, who were the authors of Elisabeth's troubles, assisted at their brother's funeral, together with their mother, the Duchess Sophia. After the burial of the prince, his noble companions consulted together on the events that had taken place during their absence, and determined to remonstrate strongly with Henry and his brother. Four of them were chosen for this mission. They went, followed by all the knights to the palace of the young princes, and, there, in the presence of the Duchess Sophia, one of them reproached Henry with his unworthy conduct, the cruelty of his acts, his forgetfulness of his first duties and most solemn obligations, his ingratitude to his virtuous and illustrious brother, the insult offered to God by such conduct, and the disgrace brought upon the country of Thuringia. The

<sup>8</sup> Wadding, Vol. II., p. 206.

<sup>9</sup> Wadding, Vol. II.

Duchess Sophia wept, the prince was at last touched and shed tears also. He offered to make amends for his injustice,<sup>10</sup> and the four deputies were instructed to negotiate with Elisabeth the conditions of a reconciliation.

The Saint, who was now more than ever detached from the things of this world, thus replied to Duke Henry's propositions. "I do not want either his castles or his towns, his lands or anything which might encumber or disturb me, but I shall be very grateful to my brother-in-law if he will kindly give me, from what is owing to me of my marriage dowry, what will enable me to provide for certain expenses which I wish to go to for the salvation of my dear husband and mine own."<sup>11</sup> An interview then took place between Henry and Elisabeth. Henry asked pardon of Elisabeth for the many grievous wrongs which he had done her. Her only reply was to throw herself, weeping, into his arms. The Duchess Sophia, her son Conrad, and the knights, all mingled their tears with those of the holy princess. Her children's rights were vindicated, her eldest son, Herman, acknowledged as lawful heir to the duchies of Thuringia and Hesse, and Henry was given the regency.

After these arrangements, Elisabeth and her children returned to the castle of Wartburg, from which she had been driven on the death of her husband. She lived there for one year, and gave herself up to prayer, contemplation and works of mercy. But soon the palace seemed to her too mixed up with the world. She got permission to move to the town of Marburg, in Hesse. There she had a little wooden house built near the convent of the Friars Minor, and she settled in this humble abode with her children and faithful companions.

Elisabeth spent the two last years of her life in this town. Not being able to get leave from her director, Conrad of Marburg, to shut herself up in a Poor Clare convent, she wore the exterior habit of the Third Order, and added the

<sup>10</sup> Wadding, Vol. II., p. 207.

<sup>11</sup> Wadding, Vol. II.

three vows of religion to the practice of the Rule. Good Friday was the day she chose for this solemn consecration of herself to her crucified Lord. On that day she went with her children and household to the Franciscan church, and there placing her hands on the altar, she vowed to renounce her own will, her relations and friends, and all the pomps and pleasures of this life, to belong unreservedly to her crucified Lord, and to follow Him till death in the paths of penance. The Guardian of the convent then cut off her hair, clothed her in the grey tunic, and girt her with the cord of St. Francis.<sup>12</sup> Further, she bound herself to go barefoot, which austere practice she observed faithfully to the end of her days.

Having made this solemn vow, Elisabeth dedicated all the income which her director had not allowed her to give up to the relief of the poor. She wanted to beg her bread, but not having received permission to do so, she endeavoured to live like a poor working woman by the labour of her hands. Through her means a hospital was built at Marburg, she became its infirmarian and servant. To her active charity there could have been no more delightful spot than this abode of suffering. Countless miracles marked these latter years of Elisabeth's life, her name became more and more celebrated, the sick and infirm came in great numbers to implore the help of her prayers, and our Lord, not willing to be outdone in generosity, was pleased to grant the petitions of a heart which beat with such heroic charity.

<sup>12</sup> According to Count Montalembert, St. Elisabeth had entered the Third Order during the life of her husband. Becoming a widow, she wished to practise the poverty of the holy Patriarch and to consecrate herself more solemnly to God. For this object, she took the exterior habit of the Third Order and bound herself by vows. St. Elisabeth has, therefore, been given as patroness, not only to the sisters of the Third Order Secular, but also to the nuns of the Third Order Regular. In the Franciscan supplement to the Roman Martyrology is found the following passage, "*Eamque sorores et moniales ejusdem Tertii Ordinis ut patronam præcipuam venerantur.*"

God did not long delay the end of His servant's pilgrimage. Elisabeth was not yet twenty-four, but her short life abounded with good works. An unalterable innocence had ever adorned her soul, persecution had tried her as fire refines the metal in the furnace, Divine charity had constantly enkindled her soul, she was, therefore, ready to be presented to her Heavenly Spouse. It was on the nineteenth of November, 1231, that Elisabeth was called to the wedding feast of eternity. Miracles were wrought at her tomb, and Gregory IX. enrolled her in the calendar of Saints, in the year 1236. (Her feast is kept on this day, by the Observance as a Double of the second class, by the Conventuals and Capuchins as a Greater Double, by the nuns of the Third Order Regular as a Double of the first class with octave, and by the universal Church as a Double.)

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### THE SAME DAY.

*Blessed Thomas of Foligno.*

[1319—1377.]

### *Of the Third Order.*

THIS holy man was born at Valmacinaia, in the diocese of Nocera, in Umbria.<sup>1</sup> His parents were rich people, and they brought up their children in the fear of God and the practice of virtue. Before Thomas was born, a bright Angel appeared to his mother, Buona. He said to her, "Buona, thank God, for the child to be born of you will be a great prophet and friend of God." On a second visit from the

<sup>1</sup> The annalists of the Order, especially Mark of Lisbon, Cornejo, and Wadding, write of Blessed Thomas. His life was published at Assisi in 1877, by Canon Leopold Amoni. *Il Profeta del secolo XIV. oil B. Tommaso Unzio e il suo tempo.* We have followed the biography of Canon Amoni.



Angel she was told that her son should be called Thomas. The child, by his angelic life, justified the marvellous favours granted before his birth. Thomas was only twelve years old when he listened to the whisper of the Holy Spirit Who inspired him to offer his chastity to God, unstained. This heavenly flower he cherished and defended by severe austerities all his life. At the age of twenty-four, moved by a further inspiration, he left his father's house to retire into solitude. As he needed guidance in his new vocation, an Angel directed him to go to a mountain near, where lived a holy hermit of the Third Order of St. Francis, Blessed Peter of Gualdo, under whose direction he placed himself, receiving the habit of the Third Order from his hands and joining in his life of prayer and penance.

He remained in this hermitage for twenty-four years, until the death of Blessed Peter. He then only left it to embrace a yet harder life, for he chose for himself a little hut of which he walled up the door, and there led the life of an Angel more than a man. He only took food twice a week and never broke silence except to speak to his confessor. The poor hut became a little heaven to him. Our Lord favoured him with visions and ecstasies, won at the cost of many conflicts with the evil one, but he overcame by his fidelity and humble prayer joined to his severe austerities, all his wicked devices. Thomas desired to live and die in his self-chosen prison, or tomb, but God had other views for him. He had lived for three years in this hut, when our Lord appeared to him, and said, "Thomas, go out of your tomb and tell the people of Tuscany of their sins. Go without fear for I go with you and will inspire your words so that they must listen." He was frightened at this command and felt how unfit he was to fulfil the order, he prayed our Lord to spare him, and leave him in his solitude. Yet, at last he had to obey the repeated orders from Heaven. This missionary of God, began his preaching in the Province of the Marches, he afterwards preached at Nocera, Assisi,

Perugia, Cortona, Arezzo, Siena, San-Miniato, Pisa, Lucca, and Florence. He warned the people of the troubles coming on Italy, exhorted them to do penance, worked wonderful miracles, in curing the sick and raising the dead and foretelling the future. He was often persecuted and calumniated, but who can prevail against God? The words of Blessed Thomas were full of the Divine Spirit, a reform set in among the people, they became docile and obedient to the teaching of the Church, from which they had been led astray.

Thomas was favoured with ecstasies and wonderful visions. Raised in spirit to the heavenly Jerusalem, he contemplated the different orders of its inhabitants. He saw the glory of the Queen of Angels, the Seraphic Patriarch St. Francis and all his faithful followers, and in particular the members of the Third Order who had faithfully kept their Rule.

Having fulfilled his orders, he was warned by an Angel to retire to Foligno, there he passed the remaining four years of his life. He lodged in a corner of the hospital, slept on the bare ground and passed his time in prayer and penance. He died on September the fifteenth, 1377. Those who assisted at his death saw a great light and heard angelic singing as the angels carried him to Paradise. The body of Blessed Thomas rests at Foligno, in the church of St. Augustine, where his feast is kept on the nineteenth of November.

NOVEMBER 25.

*Blessed Elisabeth the Good. Virgin.*

[1386—1420.]

*Of the Third Order Regular.*

ELISABETH was born at Waldsee, a town in Suabia, in the diocese of Constance, on the twenty-fifth of November 1386. Her father John Achler and her mother, Anne, were excellent people in humble circumstances. Their child Elisabeth shewed a rare piety from her very cradle, she looked so pure and innocent and had such a sweet manner that she was always called *the Good*.<sup>1</sup> Her confessor, Father Conrad Kigelin, seeing her good dispositions, advised her to give up the world and take the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis. Elisabeth was then fourteen, and at first she followed the Rule in her father's house, but shortly after, seeing that it led to some inconvenience, she left her home and was placed by her confessor in the house of a pious Tertiary who taught her to weave and she soon became as

<sup>1</sup> The life of Blessed Elisabeth was written, very soon after her death, by Father Conrad Kigelin, Provost of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, established in the little town of Waldsee. This holy religious had been for twenty years her confessor and was a witness of the heavenly favours granted to the servant of God. He wrote the book in Latin and afterwards translated it into German. Many German editions have been published since, the last came out in Waldsee in 1870. The Rev. Father Ignatius Jeiler, Custodian of the Franciscans of the Saxony Province has given us this precious biography.

clever at it as her mistress. The devil was displeased at her fervour and frequently attacked her, he perpetually broke her thread, spoilt her work and often made her lose half a day in repairing the damage he caused. She never lost patience or perseverance, but this fruitless toil caused her much distress joined to her interior trials of dryness and desolation. These trials lasted for three years. About that time Father Conrad Kigelin established a community of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis at Raue, in the outskirts of Waldsee. There he placed four of his penitents and Elisabeth, who was then seventeen. "Seeing them reduced to a great state of poverty," he says, "I ordered the four sisters to go out and beg. As for Sister Elisabeth, not liking to expose her modesty and simplicity to the world, I gave her the charge of the kitchen and she well fulfilled her office."

Her zeal for her own perfection was so great and her vigilance so incessant that her confessor found it difficult to find matter for absolution. Always sweet, obedient, given to prayer and penance, she only sought for the lowest offices in the community. Though there was no enclosure, Elisabeth had such a love of solitude that she never went out and obtained for herself the name of "the Recluse." It pleased our Lord to try His servant most severely. The devil was pitiless in his attacks on her, indeed only in the lives of the Fathers of the Desert can we find examples of such perpetual warfare, as we find in the life of this holy woman. With her confessor's permission she lived for three years without food. This displeased the devil so much that he appeared to her one day, under the form of her superior, extolled the virtue of obedience, then offered her some food to strengthen her, ordering her to take it. She submitted without a doubt but with secret repugnance, soon she discovered the fraud and went back to her mortifications with renewed courage. During the last twelve years of her life she took so little food that her life was a miracle.



The devil then tried another device. He gathered together different things belonging to the sisters and took them to Elisabeth's cell and placed them under her bed. On the convent being searched for the lost articles they were found in her cell. The poor sister was declared guilty, she was severely reprimanded, was given a hard penance, and was only thankful not to be sent out of the house as a hypocrite in the disguise of a saint. She made no excuses or complaints, submitting to her punishment with joy and blessing our Lord Who gave her the cross. The trial lasted for a long time. She became suspected by the community and her smallest actions were watched, all of them were on their guard against her. She stood alone without any consolation save that of a good conscience. Far from being troubled she went about her work without minding the looks of her companions only careful to do each action with the single intention of pleasing God. At last their eyes were opened, they asked each other how it could be possible for a person whom they saw leading such a perfect life so humble, so patient, so sweet, always the same, always cheerful—could ever have sunk so low as to steal from her companions. They remembered her silence when she was accused, her peace under reproaches, her submission under punishment, and they began to doubt and compassionate her. The superior then ordered Elisabeth to explain the matter. Her innocence was perfectly established and the community soon recognized her sanctity by the way she had borne her trials.

The temptations of the devil did not end, she was attacked again and again, sometimes he transformed himself into the appearance of an angel of light come straight from Heaven. At other times he vented his full rage on her and treated her as he had treated St. Antony in the desert. Bruised and half killed by this impure spirit, the good Elisabeth put him at last to flight by making the sign of the Cross and invoking the Holy Name. She prayed with

renewed fervour and many tears that she might not fall a victim to the snares of the devil. Our Lord permitted all kinds of trials to happen to her, short of death. She was stricken with leprosy and many other bodily torments, yet these trials only served to heighten the patience and heroic courage of His servant. She blessed God, never murmured or uttered a complaint, the joy of her soul was undisturbed. The Cross of Jesus which had always been the object of her love, the rule of her life, the subject of her meditation, was the source of her peace and her joy, by it she triumphed over the evil one, her soul yearned only for the bliss of Heaven and the pains of earth did not touch her. God rewarded her heroic fidelity by the gift of tears, ecstasies and wonderful visions. In her raptures He let her understand the happiness of the Blessed, she was allowed to visit also the place of expiation. She obtained for certain souls in Purgatory that they should appear to her confessor to ask his prayers and, above all, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. These raptures often lasted two or three days, during which she was consoled by the apparitions of our Lord, our Blessed Lady and many of the Saints. When she was ill Angels appeared in her cell, they made her bed and placed her gently on it. One day her confessor came to give Holy Communion to three of the nuns. The Sacred Host he had reserved for Elisabeth disappeared and he could not find It. He went to her, as she lay in bed, to tell her of the accident, when she told him how our Lord had come to her, surrounded with Angels, to give her Himself the Bread of Life.

The secrets of the future were often unveiled before her. During the Council of Constance she foretold the end of the great Western schism and the election of Pope Martin V. In reward for her love of Christ crucified she was allowed to feel all the pains of the Passion and to receive the marks of the Stigmata. Her head often bore the marks of the thorns and her body appeared bruised and bleeding as if she had suffered the cruel scourging. On Fridays and every

day of Lent blood flowed from the wounds and her sufferings were intense. In her sufferings she would cry out, "Ah! my Lord spare me not! Why do I not suffer more? Grant, Lord, that I may know and feel the pains of Thy Passion." The Stigmata only appeared now and then but her pains never ceased and her life was a long martyrdom. Her confessor says of her, "She persevered all her life in the meditation of the Passion of Christ. She often said to me that she preferred participating in the sufferings of our Lord to enjoying celestial visions or the sight of the joys of Paradise, 'for' she said 'after visions of celestial glory one is exposed to the danger of pride and of complacency and to the loss of all merit, but in meditating on the Passion the soul remains humble and can merit.'"

At thirty-four this blessed soul left this world of exile. Her confessor describes her holy death. "At her last moments I asked her to pray to our Lord to reveal His graces to her during her life. She replied that she prayed most earnestly that nothing should be revealed. She said that she was only a poor woman, a worm of the earth, and that people had plenty of examples as to how they should live in the lives of our Lord, of our Blessed Lady, of the Apostles, and other Saints." She asked for the Sacred Passion to be read to her and she fell asleep in peace on November the twenty-fourth, 1420. Clement XIII. approved of the honour paid to her. (Her feast is only kept by the Friars of the Observance.)

NOVEMBER 26.

*St. Leonard of Port Maurice,  
The great Missionary of the eighteenth century.*

[1676—1751.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

St. Leonard, who St. Alphonsus Liguori calls, *the great Missionary of the eighteenth century*, was born at Port Maurice, a little town on the Riviera of Genoa on the borders of the Mediterranean. His father was a gallant captain in the navy called Dominic Casanova. He was strict as a Christian and also as to his profession, and had made a vow that no woman should set foot on his vessel. On one occasion when he could not refuse one, not to break his vow he put her on board and walked himself from Genoa to Port Maurice. He brought up his children in a most Christian way, three of his sons entered the Order of St. Francis, his only daughter became a nun. St. Leonard thanked God all his life for giving him such a good father.<sup>1</sup> He was distinguished from his infancy for a precocious love of our Blessed Lady. At thirteen he was sent to Rome to his uncle, Augustine Casanova, to follow the course at the Roman College. There he was remarkable among the scholars, not

<sup>1</sup> The works of St. Leonard, published at Venice in 1868, contain his life by Father Salvator of Ormea, some unpublished writings and the journal of Brother Diego who accompanied the Saint in his missions for twenty-five years. This journal, published for the first time, gives the daily details of all St. Leonard's missions.



only for his cleverness and love of literature, but also for his innocence and solid piety. The Roman College thought they saw in him another St. Aloysius Gonzaga. He was enrolled at nineteen in the Confraternity of the Oratory of Father Caravita, and was intrusted by him to give Catechism to the poor and draw them to the churches to hear the word of God. This was the beginning of his missionary life.

Having finished his studies at the Roman College, he applied himself to the study of medicine, but God had a higher vocation in store for him in the religious life. To this he soon aspired, then came the doubt as to the Order he should join. One day, as he was thinking of this, walking near the Gesù, he saw two religious pass by clothed in poor habits, but with something singularly modest in their appearance. Out of curiosity he followed them and saw them go towards the monastery of St. Bonaventure, inhabited by the Friars Minor of the Observance. He entered their church where they were saying that verse in Compline beginning *Converte nos Deus Salutaris noster*. These words went to his heart. God showed him the way and he resolved to embrace that severe Rule, saying to himself, "Here shall be the place of my rest." Leonard went gaily to Father Grifonelli of the Oratory, who was his director, and told him all. The Father examined his vocation carefully and after much consideration told him that God had called him to the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance. At this news, his uncle was very angry and turned him out of his house. His father, on the contrary, though much grieved to lose him, wrote to give his consent. He had gone to the church, with his son's letter in his hand, and, like Abraham, he there offered up his son to God.

Leonard took the habit on the second of October 1697, and after making his noviciate at the monastery of Ponticelli, in the Sabina, he was sent to Rome to the monastery of St. Bonaventure, there to make his studies in philosophy

and theology. He gave himself so earnestly to prayer and penance that he became a perfect religious in a short time. He was most exact in the performance of the smallest religious observance, saying often to his brethren, "If now that we are young we are not exact about little things or neglect them wilfully, when we are older and have more freedom we shall neglect things of great importance." He established a custom with his companions of taking one particular virtue to practise each week, reminding each other when they failed to observe it, and he had always some pious device for their recreations. He was often heard to say that he desired most of all to preach the Gospel to the heathen and to give his life for the faith. At this time Mgr. of Tournon, who was afterwards a Cardinal, was looking for missionaries to send to China, Leonard offered himself in the hope of giving his life for our Lord, but obstacles arose and he had to give up the project. Very often during his long life he would say, sadly, "I was not worthy to shed my blood for Jesus Christ." Our Lord did not choose to make him a martyr in one day, He desired fifty years of work, austerities and sacrifices, a martyrdom not less difficult though less glorious in appearance.

When he was ordained priest, he was named lecturer of philosophy in the monastery of St. Bonaventure. Then his health began to fail and the doctors said he was going into consumption, and for many years he became worse and worse, as the remedies failed, the doctors, as a last resource, sent him to try his native air. In 1704, Leonard went to Port Maurice to the Franciscan monastery near his home. There every remedy was tried to save him, but Leonard felt the inutility of human means and turned to the Blessed Virgin. He made a vow that if he recovered his health he would consecrate himself to the missions and employ his life in the conversion of sinners. His vow was accepted, his life, strength and health were given back to him and his further vocation was made plain. As he could

not undertake the work of the missions without the permission of his superiors, he preached for some time in the church of his community at Port Maurice and gave a series of homilies on the Passion of our Lord. He also erected in front of the monastery, the Stations of the Cross. He gave missions in the diocese of Albenga where our Lord visibly blest his work. His first mission was given at Artallo, a little town two miles from Port Maurice. There he went every morning, barefooted, in spite of the cold, he spent the whole day in preaching, catechizing and hearing confessions, then in the evening, he returned to his community. One day when he was returning to the monastery after his last sermon, he heard footsteps behind him and the weary sighs of a man. Leonard turned round and asked if he could do anything for him, the poor man threw himself at his feet weeping, and said "Ah! Father, at your feet is the greatest sinner in the world." "My son," said Leonard, "I also am a very great sinner and you will find me an indulgent father." He took him to the monastery where the poor man made his confession and was sent home quite happy.

On the Feast of St. Bartholomew he was invited to preach in the town of Caramagna on the feast of the place. He was told that it was the custom, after Mass, for all the men and women to meet in the public square to give themselves up to dangerous amusements. After the Gospel, when he began his sermon, he preached strongly on the subject of this scandal. His audience seemed to be moved, but after Mass the old custom prevailed and the dancing began. Then St. Leonard went to the square with a crucifix in his hand, two men carrying candles on each side of him. He again preached to the people in such burning words that tears ran from the eyes of his hearers, and as he told them how sin crucified our Lord over again, with tears and sobs they promised no longer to profane the feast of their patron Saint, and they kept their promise. Leonard remained in

the Genoa Province of the Friars Minor from the year 1704 to 1709. Therefore he began his evangelical ministry in his own country. After that he spent more than forty years as the apostle of Tuscany, Corsica, and the rest of Italy. He went from place to place converting sinners, reconciling enemies, strengthening the weak and raising the dead.

This campaign of forty years reminds us of the apostolic lives of St. Antony of Padua and St. Bernardine. To win grace for their missions, St. Leonard drew up rules for himself and his companions. The missionary life was a hard one, a perpetual fast, strict silence, the bare floor for a bed, no meat, no eggs, nor any kind of milk food was ever seen on their table. For twenty-eight years they did not eat fish, but as many of his companions fell ill and some had died, Benedict XIV. desired them to mitigate their austerities. One brother was appointed to beg the food of the missionaries and prepare their meals. At the first sermon the Father gave out that they lived on alms like their Seraphic Father. In this way they were no expense to the parish priests, they were on the charity of the people. If the people gave much the poor of the place got the benefit of it, if little the missionaries suffered in silence and the mission gained. They paid no visits except to the sick, they would not dine out with any one, even the bishop. Beside the great truths of faith, which they preached with zeal in their missions, there were two subjects on which St. Leonard poured forth his most persuasive words.

One was the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. Following the example of St. Bernardine of Siena and St. John Capistran and all the other great missionaries of the Order, he carried a banner bearing this Blessed Name. When he spoke of it his tender eloquence gained the hearts of his hearers and tears and sighs interrupted his sermons. Wherever he gave a mission he exhorted the people to have the Holy Name painted or engraved over their doors. At Porto Ferrajo, the capital of the isle of Elba, a fervent



Christian who had been listening to the Saint, wished to paint the Holy Name over his door, but a Jew who inhabited the ground floor objected strongly, and would only consent to having it placed over one of the windows. A few days after the Jew's shop caught fire and was entirely burnt, the flames rose to the upper rooms inhabited by the Christian, but when they reached the letters of the Holy Name they fell back and went out of themselves. All the town bore witness to the miracle. His second weapon was our Blessed Lady. He always said, "What the fear of hell and the Judgment will not give me I obtain from the sermon on Mary our Mother." To increase the devotion of the people, he organized processions of penance to take place at night-fall. In one of these processions they carried a statue of our Lady on a chariot. This was illuminated brilliantly with ten thousand candles and all the town joined in honouring the Queen of Heaven. After our Lady, came devotion to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The holy missionary made a collection for them and distributed the money among the priests of the town for Masses, but none of these Masses were ever said at the monastery.

It was the custom of St. Leonard during his missions, after having preached on hardness of heart, to have a bell tolled, which he called, "The knell of obstinate sinners." Every evening, one hour after the Angelus, when every family was preparing for bed, the great bell of the church tolled, its solemn sound heard in the silence of the night awoke the consciences of sinners. At that moment every one fell on their knees and said three *Paters* and three *Aves* for hardened sinners. At the beginning of a mission, given at St. Germano, the Saint had asked for the great bell to be tolled for the conversion of sinners, but many people laughed scornfully at this holy practice. However the sacristan went to the church for that purpose, when, on his way, he heard the bell tolling loudly. He and his companions thought that some men had got up to the belfry, for the rope

was drawn up so high. They were yet more astonished to find that all the doors of the church were locked as usual. Still the bell went on tolling for half an hour, while the sacristan kept calling up to the men, whom he imagined must be in the belfry, not to break the bell. The bell rang louder and louder, the sacristan got a light and he and his friends went up to the belfry. No one was there the bell was tolling by invisible force, and it was clear that God had made manifest, by this miracle, how much he was pleased with the practice which had always had such good effects.

He never left a parish without having seen the Stations of the Cross erected. He explained to the faithful all the graces and blessings attached to this devotion and exhorted them to practise it for the good of their souls. During his long missionary career he was always most urgent to propagate this beautiful devotion and he saw six hundred stations erected. In one of his writings he remarks in touching words, "May I be permitted, on my knees, to say to all bishops, priests, rectors, and ministers of religion that they have a remedy in their hands, which will prove efficacious under any affliction and evil surrounding us, if they will only take every means to introduce into each parish a set of the Stations of the Cross. . . . Oh! the blessings that it spreads among the faithful, I know it by experience. Every day I see it confirmed, that wherever this holy practice is taken up with zeal, there is a most marked improvement in morals." St. Leonard was indeed the great promoter of this devotion during the eighteenth century. At his request the Sovereign Pontiff allowed the Franciscans of the Observance to erect them outside their churches in all places under their jurisdiction. To him we owe all the decrees and conditions given by the Sacred Congregation as to the erection and practice of the Way of the Cross. He also established in many towns the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

His missions always ended by a general Communion and

the Papal benediction. If any quarrels still existed in the places the Fathers would not leave till they were made up. When this was done they went away quietly not telling the people when they were going, so as to avoid the regrets and goodbyes and all the honour and gratitude which they would certainly have received. Following these holy and wise rules, laid down by the Saint, the missions did incalculable good to souls. He gave them, as we have said, in the diocese of Albenga, he had just ended his labours there, for the time, in May 1709, and was proposing to resume them in the autumn following, when his superiors called him to a new sphere of action.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosmo III., a truly Christian prince, having much at heart the spiritual interests of his subjects and knowing the good done by the Friars of the Observance at Rome, in their monastery of St. Bonaventure, he applied to Pope Clement XI. for some of the Friars, offering them the Franciscan monastery *del Monte delle Croci*, situated on a hill above Florence. The Pope approved of the project, and the superiors of St. Bonaventure sent four religious to take possession of the monastery there to establish the rule of the Observance. St. Leonard, who had been living in the Genoa Province of the Observance, though belonging to that of St. Bonaventure, was sent for to join the new community. On September the eighth, 1709, he left his brethren of Port Maurice and went to Florence. He lived for more than twenty years in the monastery *del Monte* and preached in all the dioceses of Tuscany.

He began by putting the new community in order, and preached in Florence. The Grand Duke, Cosmo III., was astonished at the effect of his preaching and begged him to give missions all through Tuscany offering to provide for all that was necessary for St. Leonard and his companions. He accepted the offer of the missions but rejected the temporal help offered him by the prince. "I have a Master,"

he said, "much richer than your highness, He has never let me want in the past and I am sure that He will supply all our needs in the future." When the prince, in astonishment, asked the name of his benefactor, St. Leonard replied, "My benefactor is God, His glory I work for and He will feed me." He soon became known in all the provinces of Tuscany, going from one diocese to the next, from Florence to Arezzo, Chiusi, Massa, Grosseto, Siena, Volterra, San Miniato, Colta, Lucca, Pisa, Leghorn, Pescia, Prato, Pistoja, etc. Everywhere he seemed like an apostle sent by God and his preaching caused a wonderful change among the people. Bishops and priests were all eager to get the great missionary to preach to their flocks and when they had obtained his consent they could not sufficiently express their joy and gratitude. The priest of one of the parishes of Pistoja wrote to the Guardian of *dél Monte*, "Blessed be the hour in which I first thought of asking for Father Leonard. God alone knows all the good he has done here. His preaching has reached all hearts; only those who would not go to hear him have resisted the grace. The crowd has been so great that on the occasion of the second procession of penance it numbered fifteen thousand persons, and at the papal blessing nearly twenty thousand were present. All the confessors in the town had to work hard. The lords and great ladies came during the hottest part of the day to go to confession to him, the poor country people slept under the portico of the church. Blessed be God Who consoles His Church by sending such labourers. It is the devotion of the Stations of the Cross that seems to have done such marvels. The nobles and their ladies all make the Stations with great recollection, they kiss the ground without blushing and all this goes on since the mission."

Leghorn was a wicked city. The rich Jews, Turks and Protestants congregated there as merchants, corrupted the place. St. Leonard arrived there on the eve of the carnival and in spite of the time of feasting and dissipation he would



not put off his mission. No one thought it would be successful, but his preaching was so electrifying that the town became like another Ninive. The public amusements were suppressed and the crowd which surrounded the house of the missionaries day and night, became so great that guards had to keep order. The triumphs of grace were numerous and startling. Forty women of bad lives hearing reports of the mission were drawn by curiosity to go to the sermons, the words of the Saint woke in their hearts such fear of the punishments in the next world that they threw themselves on their knees on the pavement and with tears and sobs they asked pardon publicly for the scandal they had given. He knew so well how to awaken contrition among his congregation that often he had to pause on account of the sobs of the people drowning his voice. Sometimes when the people were cold and indifferent he would place a crown of thorns on his head and with cords and iron chains he would discipline himself and when his eyes were closed with blood and tears, to the astonishment of his audience, he asked for mercy for them from God and his prayer was granted. Our Lord often confirmed his preaching by miraculous favours.

During his residence in Tuscany, he filled the office of Guardian of the monastery of *del Monte* and founded the hermitage of *l'Incontro*, sanctified by the penance of Blessed Gerard of Villamagna. It was to this retreat that the Saint and his companions went from time to time to refresh themselves by prayer and penance. He used to say, "Come let us make our noviciate for Paradise, I have given many missions to others now I am going to give one to Brother Leonard."<sup>2</sup> In 1730, he took leave of the Duke of Tuscany

<sup>2</sup> The little monastery founded by St. Leonard was under the charge of one brother. The friars only went there for their spiritual exercises. At the present time the Friars Minor of the Observance have enlarged the buildings and have established a community of recollection there, which devotes itself to the work of giving missions.

to go to the other provinces of Italy. He also went to Rome where he preached in many churches by the order of Clement XII. The conversions were so numerous that all the confessionals in Rome were besieged. At his last mission given at Sancta Maria in Trastevere he was obliged to preach in the public square, the crowd filling it and the neighbouring streets, even the roofs of the houses near were covered with people. The untiring missionary went to Velletri, Orvieto, and Civita Vecchia, there he gave a mission to the convicts, then on to Rieti, San Severino and many other towns. In 1740, Benedict XIV. invited him to come back to Rome to preach the Jubilee in honour of his elevation to the Papacy, in five churches. He went afterwards to Naples and the Roman States, preaching again in Rome in 1742. His next place was Genoa where no building was large enough to contain the crowds that rushed to hear him, he was obliged to collect his audience in the large valley of Bisagno, where it was thought that a hundred thousand people formed his congregation. After preaching in Lucca and Pistoja, he went over to the Isle of Corsica.

Corsica belonged to the Republic of Genoa. The Senate begged St. Leonard to preach in this island which had long been a prey to civil war. The need was indeed great, the population was split up into factions, rivalries, hatred and all sorts of miseries, often resulting in scuffles and murders, were the results. He was well aware of the hardness and difficulty of his task but the will of God was made clearly known to him by the voice of the Sovereign Pontiff who desired him to consent to the wishes of the chief of the republic. He embarked at Bastia in the month of May 1744, and he found the island in a fearful condition. Political and family quarrels were rife everywhere, every day great crimes were committed, in two years there had been more than two thousand murders. His first mission was in the town of Mariano. The inhabitants assisted armed with guns, pistols and daggers. "We found," he says, "three

factions flying at each others' throats, but from the first sermon they laid down their arms and embraced each other in public." At Casinga, where the population were among the most turbulent and warlike of the island, the work of grace was more resisted. St. Leonard writes, "The first and the second day they came to the mission armed like bandits. I did not at first appear to notice this, afterwards I begged them to come unarmed and they obeyed me. At last, after the sermon on our Blessed Lady, they embraced in public and peace was concluded. Everywhere it required great trouble and patience to make them give up their quarrels and make peace." At Castel d'Arqua the church looked more like a field of battle than a church. The two factions were drawn up, like two camps, each side of the missionary. The last sermon had been given and there was no apparent result. Deeply grieved the Saint wished his audience goodbye. All at once both sides surrounded him, they gave each other the kiss of peace and in thanksgiving for this happy ending there was great public rejoicing concluded by piling up their firearms.

Al through the summer he went about from town to village of the island, climbing the mountains, preaching in the open air when the churches could not contain the congregations, healing strifes and spreading peace. His strength was giving way under age and infirmities, the fatigues of the long journeys on foot and the severity of his penances for the conversion of souls, but the heroic old man only gathered up his energy and courage yet more to overcome nature. Our Lord visibly blest his ministry and often attested it by miracles. At Isolaccia, in the diocese of Aleria, where he gave a mission, the population were the most lawless of the island, they lived chiefly in the woods, earning their living almost entirely by stealing and plundering and they were in lamentable ignorance of spiritual things. For twenty years they had been divided into two parties and atrocious murders were frequent among them. He tried his best to move these

stony hearts. One of the two sides showed a disposition to make peace but the other would not hear of it, its chief, named Lupo, was a veritable wolf, never speaking save to utter horrible oaths and blasphemies, he would not allow his party to make peace. St. Leonard, brokenhearted, made up his mind to leave. On the night before his departure the house where he lodged took fire and with difficulty he was rescued through the window. The next day he said Mass, preached and erected the Stations of the Cross, returning to the ruined house he stepped on a plank which gave way under him and he was seriously injured. As there were no doctors or medicines to be found in that place his companions arranged that he should be taken to the nearest town on a rough litter they had prepared. With a last hope they applied to that party who had so obstinately refused all admonitions, saying, "Since now we leave you desolate on account of the accident to our Father, caused by you, at least help us to carry him." They all eagerly pressed forward, Lupo himself went to the head of the litter. After they had gone a few steps he cried out, "Stop, stop," they set down the litter. Lupo thrust them all aside and said to St. Leonard, "My Father, God Himself has told me not to make peace." The Saint answered "My son, the devil said that, God orders the contrary." "If God orders it," replied Lupo, "I will obey." Saying this he let off his gun crying out, "Long live peace." All his followers discharged their guns crying out, with one voice, "Long live peace." Thus was peace made at Isolaccia. The whole island would have been at peace if he had not been obliged by his accident to leave Corsica to take some rest at Genoa. In a short time his health was re-established and he again gave missions in the town and the republic but he was not able to return to Corsica. He preached in the dioceses of Lucca, Ferrara, Bologna, Ravenna, Spoleto, Terni, etc. In 1748, he gave missions in many provinces of Naples and Sabina. Benedict XIV. sent for him to Rome in 1749, to preach to



the faithful during the holy year. He preached for fifteen days at the Piazza Navona to an immense crowd. The Sacred College assisted at the sermons and the Pope was present at four of them. On the last day the Pope gave his Benediction. Every sermon bore fruit and the priests of different parishes could hardly hear all the confessions. The holy old man of seventy-three preached with the same results in many of the churches of Rome. In that year he gave retreats to several communities and established the Stations of the Cross in the Coliseum, he founded several confraternities, especially that of the Sacred Heart, in connection with the church of St. Theodore.

After his labours in the Eternal City he took leave of the Pope and went to preach in the dioceses of Lucca and Bologna, at one of his sermons it is stated that twenty thousand persons were present. In the month of November 1751, the Pope recalled him once more to Rome. On his way he was seized by fatal illness. When he arrived at Foligno, his companion begged him not to say Mass on account of his weakness. The Saint replied, "My dear brother, one Mass is worth all the treasures of the world." Feeling that his end was drawing near, his great wish was to die at Rome in his dear monastery of St. Bonaventure where he had made his vows. His desire was heard, for he arrived at Rome on November twenty sixth, towards six in the evening, at eleven of the same night his blessed soul went to its reward. He was seventy-five years old and had passed fifty-four years in religion. His body is venerated in the church of the monastery of St. Bonaventure. St. Leonard was beatified by Pius VI. and canonized by Pius IX. on June twenty-ninth 1867, at the same time as the holy martyrs of Gorcum and St. Mary Francis of the Five Wounds.

(His feast is kept on this day by the Friars of the Observance and the Capuchins as a Double of the second Class, by the Conventuals as a Greater Double. The

Friars of the Observance say a special Office in his honour.)

St. Leonard had often on his lips this ejaculatory prayer, "My Jesus, mercy." He loved to whisper it in the ears of the dying. Pius IX. granted an indulgence of one hundred days at each recitation of this short prayer.

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NOVEMBER 27.

*Blessed Delphine of Glandèves. Virgin.*

[1284—1358.]

*Of the Third Order.*

THE Blessed Delphine, destined by Heaven to become the spouse of St. Elzear of Sabran, was born in the year 1284, at the castle of Puy Michel in Provence.<sup>1</sup> She was the daughter of William of Signe, of the house of Glandèves, lord of Puy Michel, and of Delphine of Barras his wife. At the age of seven years she lost her father and mother, and was placed under the guardianship of her uncles and under the direction of her aunt Cecilia of Puget, Abbess of St. Catharine of Sorbs, in the diocese of Riez. From her infancy the little child showed a lively inclination for all the practices of religion, Virtue grew in her with her growing

<sup>1</sup> According to the lessons in the Breviary, Delphine was born in 1284, and died at the age of seventy-four, so that her death must have taken place towards the year 1358. It is also stated that St. Elzear was about fifteen at the time of their marriage, while historians tell us that she was nearly two years older than her husband. All the annalists of the Order mention St. Elzear and Blessed Delphine. Father Elzear Borély, a Franciscan of the convent of Apt, has given us an account of their lives. This writer has served as a guide to the Abbé Boze in his Biography of St. Elzear and Blessed Delphine, published in Paris in 1860.

intelligence, her soul expanded at the breath of grace, and her heart, strong in contempt of the world and its pleasures, burned with ardour at the thought of Heaven.

By the time she had attained her twelfth year, Delphine was already pre-eminently holy, a vessel of election worthy to be looked on by God and His Angels. Rich in the goods of this world, possessed of an immense fortune, most willingly would she have sacrificed all that she might belong solely to the King of kings. Virginitv had an unspeakable attraction for her, she had made a vow to her God to remain a virgin, and therefore, when she heard her uncles speak of uniting her to some one of the great lords of Provence, she was filled with sadness and she deplored her state. She would gladly have seen her castles burned to the ground, and all her riches scattered to the winds, if she herself might only be forgotten by the world. Meanwhile Charles II., King of Sicily and Count of Provence, had cast his eyes on Delphine as a bride for Elzear, Count of Sabran, a youth brought up, like herself, in the practice of the greatest virtues. Delphine opposed the project energetically and nothing would have moved her from her resolution, if the Blessed Virgin had not appeared to her and reassured her by promising to be the shield of her virginity even in the married state.

On the evening of the marriage, Delphine informed her husband that she had made a vow of perpetual virginity, and she spoke so touchingly in praise of this angelic virtue that the young count promised to do all that she desired. The blessed pair spent that night and many others in prayer, they implored the Divine Mercy and besought the Dispenser of all grace that He would preserve them in holiness and innocence. Delphine took part in the holy prayers, the mortifications and vigils, and the contemplations of her pious husband. She joined with him in his generous care of the poor, and in his efforts to make the law of God and the precepts of Holy Church respected by all persons living on their estates or employed in their service. They spurred each

other on to virtue, they spoke together of all that was nearest their hearts, and thus fortified themselves in good works.

In order to strengthen themselves more and more against the world and the temptations of the flesh, they both entered the Third Order of St. Francis, and, not content with keeping the Rule, they added to its wise prescriptions other fasts, daily austerities, long and fervent prayers. When it was a question of bringing down on themselves the blessing of Heaven or an increase of virtue, they did not count the cost.

The world was then for many years the witness of a most admirable spectacle. Not only did Delphine and Elzear give edification by their own sanctity, but thanks to their care and example, religion flourished throughout the whole extent of their domains, the churches were frequented, Sundays and festivals carefully observed, God's Holy Name revered and blessed, peace reigned in every village, in every dwelling, charity made her sweet presence felt everywhere so as to banish altogether the miseries of poverty. Such was the great work done by the lord of Sabran and his heroic wife. Their piety was as profitable to their people as it was to themselves, they sought the good of souls, and the good Providence of our Heavenly Father vouchsafed, in addition, all that can make man happy here below.

Elzear breathed his last at Paris, in 1323, or according to some writers in 1325. His confessor, Father Francis Mayronis obliged him to reveal publicly the secret of the virginity he had always preserved with his wife. Therefore Elzear, the moment before receiving the Holy Viaticum, said in presence of all the assistants, "I declare that I leave Delphine a virgin as I received her, and I add that if I have been able to do some good works during my life, I owe it to my wife." The remains of the Saint were taken by Father Francis Mayronis to the town of Apt in Provence, and here they were interred in the church of the Friars Minor.

At the very moment that St. Elzear expired, Blessed



Delphine, then with the Court of Naples which was at that time at Avignon, was informed by revelation of the death of her pious husband. She fell on her knees, wept abundantly and prayed most fervently for the repose of his soul. The sad event was soon known at Court, but the king refused to put any faith in Delphine's words until the day when a messenger, sent with all speed from Paris, arrived to confirm the fatal news.

Blessed Delphine had now lost all that was dearest to her in this world. Faith alone enabled her to bear her natural grief with calmness and resignation. There was nothing now left to detain her in the world, and after obtaining permission from the king of Naples to leave the Court, she retired to Cabrières, a little village of Provence, not far from Ansouis. In her solitude she still mourned for Elzear. Her grief had a twofold cause, the privation of the spiritual consolation which she had enjoyed in the companionship of her pious husband and the fear that he might be detained in Purgatory. Weighed down by the latter thought, she redoubled her prayers, her alms, her vigils, she had prayers said for him everywhere, but nothing lessened her apprehensions. At last, one day, when she was weeping in the chapel of the castle, she saw a bright light in the holy place, and then she heard a well known voice, the voice of Elzear, say these words, "You are wrong, Delphine, to be thus inconsolable at my absence. What! you can grieve at my happiness? God has had mercy on me, he has broken my bonds, and I am in the company of the Blessed. And you, too, freed from all earthly ties, you have nothing to do but to serve God all the rest of your life."

Consoled in all her troubles by this sweet vision, Delphine resolved to consecrate herself unreservedly to our Lord, to strip herself of all her possessions so that she might serve Him in poverty and in detachment from all earthly things. But she could not sell her estates without the permission of her suzerain, Robert of Anjou, King of Naples and Count

of Provence. She therefore made a journey to Naples to lay her request before the king. She appeared at the Court in so modest and humble a manner that the king was moved to tears, she refused the lodging which was offered to her in the palace, and chose for herself a lowly dwelling in one of the quietest parts of the city. Such an example worked immense good at the Court and among the nobility. Persons in the highest rank felt themselves drawn to follow in the footsteps of Delphine when they saw her whom they had known in so high a position, now living a life of voluntary poverty, given up to visiting and relieving the poor, to frequenting the churches, and avoiding the world and all that could bind her to this earth. They too began to think of doing like her in caring for the poor and the afflicted. Men hitherto given up to pleasure were ashamed of themselves, and amended their ways, others, again, embraced religious life.

The pious Queen Sancha often went to visit Blessed Delphine in her humble abode. These two chosen souls loved to converse together of the things of God, and they might often be seen going through the streets of Naples on foot, on their way to visit the churches and the homes of the poor and the sick. It was by the advice of Delphine that Blessed Sancha founded, at Naples, the monastery of Poor Clares, to which she herself was destined to retire after the death of her husband, King Robert.

Blessed Delphine had come to Naples for three or four months only, as she thought, but the queen persuaded her to remain there for about two years. She obtained, not without some difficulty, leave from the king to dispose of her property. First, the furniture of the castle of Ariano was sold, together with all which came to her from this countship by virtue of the will of St. Elzear, she distributed the proceeds among the poor of Naples and Ariano, with the exception of a thousand gold florins which she caused to be distributed among the poorest families on her estates in

Provence. After having thus deprived herself of all she possessed in the kingdom of Naples, Delphine sent letters patent to her cousin Elzear of Villeneuve, Bishop of Digne, begging him to sell all the property she possessed in Provence, and to employ the price in relieving the poor and in other good works. In truth no miser was ever more eager to accumulate riches than was the Blessed Delphine to get rid of them. She thus reduced herself to utter poverty. This was indeed but the fulfilment of a design formed long before with Elzear, death alone had prevented that great Saint from adding to his many heroic acts that of the entire renunciation of all the goods of this world.

Blessed Delphine left Naples and proceeded to Sicily at the request of Queen Eleanor, sister to King Robert of Naples and St. Louis of Anjou. In spite of her longing to lead a solitary life, she deemed it her duty to yield to the prayers of the princess, who was desirous of obtaining her advice concerning divers charitable foundations. She started therefore for Palermo, her mind full of the thought of giving up all the goods of this world, and very resolute to practise the strictest poverty for the future. After two days journey, she stopped at a small village where she spent the night. Next morning, the handmaid of the Lord went to the parish church, made her confession and attended Holy Mass. Before receiving Holy Communion she made the vow of perpetual poverty, and this she did in so touching a manner that all present were moved to tears. During her stay at Palermo, Delphine employed herself solely in works of piety and charity. She refused to live in the palace and took a lodging in the quietest part of the city. At Palermo she first began to beg her bread from door to door, in order to follow all the more faithfully in the footsteps of her Seraphic Father. And indeed for the future she was to live by the bread of charity alone.

The death of Blessed Philip of Aix, a Franciscan religious who had formerly been her director, brought her back to

Naples where she continued to live on alms. The king and everyone at Court, the queen, above all, were full of admiration at her perfect detachment. This fresh instance of sublime virtue confirmed the good that Delphine had already worked in all ranks of society. Her second stay at Naples was not of long duration. The pious countess learnt with grief that none of her property in Provence had been sold. The Bishop of Digne, who had been commissioned to effect the sale, was in fact afraid that his cousin's resolution might be but the result of a passing fervour, and he thought it prudent to await her return in order to give her time for reflection. So, after taking leave of the King and Queen of Naples, Delphine made haste to return to Provence, where she had all her possessions sold, and the proceeds distributed among the poor, and to churches and monasteries and other good works. Her servants had their share of her benefactions, she provided for all their wants, and then dismissed them with words which drew tears and sobs from them all. She wished to live quite alone and like a very poor person, but one of her maids of honour refused to be separated from her, she promised to lead her life, and to share all the troubles and trials which might come to her. On this condition Delphine agreed to her wish, and took her as a companion in her visits and when she went to ask for alms. This chosen soul, whose name was Barthélemie, remained with the servant of God till her death. She received her last sigh, and benefited so much by her example as to rise to a high degree of perfection.

Now that she had thus deprived herself of everything and completed her sacrifice, Delphine withdrew to the town of Apt, but very soon, tired of the frequent visits she received there, she settled in the village of Cabrières, where she chose for her abode a shabby little house almost in ruins. Her brother in law, William of Sabran, could not get her to consent to take a more comfortable lodging elsewhere, so he forced her to accept a room in an old castle adjoining the



church, and here, by means of a little opening made in the wall, she could be present at the Office and could pour out her soul for long hours before the Blessed Sacrament. Thus Delphine's longings were realized beyond all her hopes. Far from the eyes of men, and in the sight of God alone, she had the leisure to taste and know *how sweet and pleasant is the Lord*. Her dress consisted of a grey tunic of poor coarse stuff, tied round the waist with the cord of St. Francis, she wore a long black veil of common linen which entirely covered her. She never left her beloved solitude save when she went to ask for alms in the village street.

After a sojourn of several years at Cabrières, Delphine went to live in the town of Apt, where the body of St. Elzear reposed, there she spent the last years of her life. In this town she altered none of her habits, she lived on the bread of charity, which she begged from door to door for the love of the Lord Jesus. She was to be seen, as at Cabrières, going through the streets with her wallet on her shoulders. The most sensible persons could not sufficiently admire this love of poverty and abjection in one of such high rank, but others there were who turned her into ridicule or treated her as a madwoman. More than once she had to submit to gibes and insults from low minded and irreligious people. Certain poor persons were indeed insolent enough to say, that, after having dissipated her own property, she was depriving them of the alms which was their due, and that, moreover, she richly deserved to want necessaries since her foolish extravagance had reduced her to poverty.

The handmaid of the Lord rejoiced in her soul at being allowed to share in the humiliations of her Heavenly Bridegroom. She never paused to consider the rash judgments of men, nothing could trouble her in the practice of humility which she had imposed on herself for the love of the Lord Jesus. She received her share of the food which charitable persons distributed to the poor, and was not ashamed to eat it in their company. When she was present at the services

in the cathedral of Apt, she took her place among the poor women of the lower class on a stone bench. Her brother-in-law, William of Sabran, and her relative, Elzear of Ville-neuve, Bishop of Digne, had commissioned certain persons to watch over her so that she should want for nothing, but still to make her accept anything it was necessary to conceal from her who it was that sent it.

Delphine lived in a poor little house close to the church of the Friars Minor. One of these religious was the guide of her conscience. Each time she was present at the Holy Sacrifice, each time she approached the tribunal of penance, she shed many tears. God had granted her the gift of tears, and when it was remarked to her that she was in danger of losing her eyesight, she answered, "It matters little to me if I lose the eyes of my body, provided that I keep the eyes of my soul, which show me the hideousness of my sins."

Delphine recited the Divine Office every day, and she divided her time between prayer, reading and work. Her ordinary reading consisted of the Sacred Scriptures, the Soliloquies of St. Augustine and the Homilies of St. Gregory. The time which was not devoted to pious exercises she employed in spinning, sewing and embroidering for churches. Two altar cloths of her making were preserved by the Franciscans of Apt and, so beautifully worked that people were never tired of admiring them.

Her own poverty did not make her forget the needs of the poor. She strove to help them by all the means in her power. Her humility did not prevent her from frequently giving most useful and valuable advice, nor from labouring for the salvation of souls. On one occasion the charitable servant of God even left her solitude in order to reconcile two gentlemen, relatives of her own, who were on the point of fighting, she had the happiness of healing their quarrel and making them desire peace. Thus the bloodshed and miseries which are inseparable from strife of any kind were prevented. God granted her the gifts of working miracles

and of prophecy and many cures were due to her merits and her prayers. Delphine became a special providence for the places where she lived.

The pious king Robert of Naples, brother of St. Louis of Anjou, died in 1343, and Blessed Sancha, his widow, wrote to the good countess to ask her to cross the sea, once more, in order to give her some consolation. Delphine laid the matter before our Lord, and when she knew that such was His Adorable Will, she started for Naples in spite of her infirmities, and arrived there after a rough passage. The virtuous princess received her as if she had been an Angel from Heaven, laid bare to her all her thoughts and listened to her with delight while she spoke of the love of God. During one of their interviews, Sancha saw the face of Delphine as if shining with celestial light.

Delphine quitted Naples soon after Queen Sancha had left the world in order to take the veil in the monastery of Poor Clares which she had founded. She was back at Apt towards the end of the year 1345. Our Lord vouchsafed to visit her with long and painful illnesses. During her latter years, she was chained to her couch and condemned to a daily and hourly martyrdom. Never once, however, could the severest pain draw from her a complaint or the smallest sign of impatience. Always calm, always joyous, always equable, she deemed it a thousand-fold happiness to suffer for her God.

At last the hour of reward arrived for this heroic woman, she understood that it was so and she prepared herself for it with redoubled love. Elzear of Pontévès, Bishop of Apt, desired to administer the Last Sacraments to her himself, and the Friars Minor were present at that supreme moment. On the twenty-sixth of November, 1358, Delphine gave up her virginal soul to God. She was about seventy-four years of age. She was buried in the church of the Franciscans at Apt, near the body of St. Elzear. During the funeral, angelic harmonies were heard to the great wonder and

admiration of the crowd. Pope Urban V. (who had canonized St. Elzear, whose godson he was) approved the *cultus* rendered to Blessed Delphine by the faithful. In 1791, the relics of St. Elzear and Blessed Delphine were removed from the church of the Franciscans to the old cathedral where they still repose. (The feast of Blessed Delphine is kept on this day, November the twenty seventh, by the Observance as a Greater Double, and on December the fourteenth by the Conventuals and the Capuchins as a Double.)

“Lord, Who, among so many other gifts, hast granted to Blessed Delphine, Thy servant, the glory of virginity in marriage, vouchsafe that we may one day participate in her blessedness whose memory we celebrate here below.” (*Collect in the Office of Blessed Delphine.*

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### THE SAME DAY.

*Blessed Raymund Lulle. Martyr.*

[1236—1315.]

*Of the Third Order.*

THIS blessed man belonged to the noble family of the Lulles of Barcelona, who followed James of Aragon and settled in Majorca, after the conquest of that island. Raymund was born at Palma, and early in life was attached to the Court of the King of Majorca. His conduct was far from being a presage of what he was eventually to become, for, yielding to the temptations which came in his way, he became a slave to vice. But the mercy of God was watching over him. Raymund was thirty years old, and married, when it pleased our Lord to cast a look of compassion on the poor prodigal and to bind him irrevocably to His service.

One day, Jesus Christ nailed to the Cross, appeared to



him, and said, "Raymund, follow Me." Raymund hesitated, for the thought of complete detachment from the good things of this world was abhorrent to him, and the prospect of humiliations made him shudder. But for five days running our Lord returned to the charge. He wanted this soul that He might lead it on to great things, and His love never wearied. Troubled at first, then ashamed of his disorderly life, Raymund at last recognized the new way that lay before him, he did penance, was contrite for his sins, and asked himself what he could do to please God. At that time the Moors were masters of a part of Spain. They inhabited the coast of Africa nearest to Spain, and the great object then was either to convert them to Christianity or to drive them away by fighting them. Raymund desired to devote himself to the first named work, and this was, henceforward, to be the object of his life.

On the Feast of St. Francis, he heard a bishop speak in his sermon of the self-sacrifice of the Seraphic Patriarch. This was the finishing stroke of grace, so to speak, for Raymund. He sold his property, reserved a portion of the proceeds for the support of his family, and distributed the rest to the poor. He then joined the Third Order, and, with the consent of his wife, left his country with the intention of devoting his time, thoughts and actions, and himself to God's service.

Raymund visited the shrines of our Lady of Roc Amadour in France, of St. James of Compostella, and other holy places. He spent nine years on the mountain of Ramda, and he was favoured in this solitude with heavenly visions and received infused science of which his very remarkable writings give proof. This servant of Jesus Christ never left his solitude save to fulfil the mission which he had received from Heaven. He was convinced that the only really efficacious mode of converting the heathen, was by establishing convents in which Arabic and other languages spoken by heathen nations should be taught, and by writing special

books for their conversion. His whole life was devoted to the twofold work, of promoting the foundation of such convents in the Order of St. Francis, and to the writing of books full of heavenly doctrine, which earned for him the title of the *Illuminated Doctor*.

In the prosecution of these objects, he spent forty years in travelling, he visited Rome, Avignon, Montpellier, Paris and Vienna. The sufferings, fatigues, difficulties, troubles, and humiliations, he underwent in the accomplishment of his work, are untold. But such was his intense desire for the conversion of infidels that nothing could shake his constancy. Raymund went over to Africa, four times, to preach the Faith. He had the happiness of suffering for Jesus Christ, and he worked many conversions.

His fourth journey to Africa took place in 1314, he was seventy-nine years old. When he got to Bougie, in order to bear witness to his Saviour, he went to the public square, and there openly proclaimed the Faith, saying that he was ready to demonstrate the truth and to seal his belief with his blood. The populace were enraged at his boldness, they fell upon him, dragged him to the palace of the governor, overwhelming him with blows and ill-treatment. The prince condemned him to be stoned to death, and the sentence was executed on the twenty-ninth of June, 1315. He was left for dead, and some Genoese merchants got leave to carry him off in their ship. He still breathed, but when they arrived opposite Majorca, the blessed martyr gave up his brave soul to God.

His mortal remains were taken to Majorca and buried in the Franciscan church, in presence of an immense concourse of people. Miracles took place at his tomb, and Leo X. approved of the devotion to him.

Blessed Raymund Lulle must rank among the most illustrious men of his time. Without any previous study, amid incessant travelling, he found means to write a prodigious number of books, to touch upon questions of the most exalted doctrine, and to exercise undoubted influence over his

contemporaries. In all his labours, writings, and travels, what he sought was the glory of God, the exaltation of His Church, the extension of His Kingdom, and the propagation of the Faith everywhere. For the Church, Raymund sacrificed all his repose, and he gave his life for the Church, and the Church in her turn has enrolled him among the number of her martyrs.<sup>1</sup> (His commemoration is made only by the Friars Minor of the Observance.)

<sup>1</sup> The Bollandists and the Annalists of the Order may be consulted on the writings and wroks of Blessed Raymund Lulle.

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NOVEMBER 28.

*St. James della Marca,*  
*Disciple of St. Bernardine of Siena.*

[1391—1476.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

ST. JAMES DELLA MARCA was great in deeds and in words, powerful through his apostolate and his miracles, eminent by his labours in the defence of the Church and for the succour which he procured for Christian Europe. He is worthy to be placed by the side of St. Bernardine of Siena, of St. John Capistran and of Blessed Albert of Sartiano, and he is justly considered to be one of the four pillars of the Observance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The acts of St. James della Marca are related by all the annalists of the Order, especially by Mariano, Mark of Lisbon and Wadding, Vol. IX, XIV. The Saint's first biographer was Father Venanzio of Fabriano, who had long been his companion. The Life which he left us has been a valuable source whence later writers have obtained their information about St. James della Marca. Among the last biographers of the Saint we may name Father Gaspar of Monte Santo, *Vita di San Giacomo di*

He was born at Monte Prandone, a little town in the diocese of Ascoli in the March of Ancona. His parents had not many of the goods of this world, but were rich in the treasures of faith. At the moment of his birth, a bright light filled the house and caused all present to predict great things for the child. Deprived at an early age of his pious parents, this chosen soul went to his uncle, a virtuous priest of Offida, who taught him the rudiments of Latin, and then sent him to study humanities at Ascoli. There he went through his studies with brilliant success and was remarkable for his rare piety. He then passed on to the University of Perugia in order to study civil and canon law.

At Perugia, his time was divided between prayer, study, and works of piety and charity. His success was rapid, and the doctor's degree which was conferred on him enabled him to take his position as a public man. A rich gentleman of Perugia, charmed by his rare qualities, entrusted him with the education of his children, and afterwards taking him to Florence, obtained for him an honourable post among the magistrates of that city. A brilliant future, according to the world's notions, was already before our Saint, but God, Who had other views for him, opened the eyes of His faithful servant to the dangers of the world, by inspiring him with contempt for its fleeting joys and with the desire of seeking the retirement of the cloister. His first idea was to enter the Carthusian convent at Florence, indeed he took steps towards this end, but the Prior of the Carthusians recommended him to make more sure of his vocation. Meantime, our Saint had occasion to accompany his patron's family on a visit to Bibbiena, a small town situated at the foot of Mount Alvernia. There he

*Monte Prandone. Ascoli 1804; Father Joseph Arcangelo of Fratta Magiore, Vita dell' apostolico eroe San Giacomo della Marca, dell' Ordine dei Minori Osservanti di San Francesco. Seconda edizione. Napoli, 1851. Father Lachère, Minor of the Observance, Doctor of theology, Vie de Saint Jacques de la Marche, de la Régulière Observance de Saint François, Dijon, 1728.*



made acquaintance with the Friars of the Observance at the convent of *San Lorenzo*, and he was so much edified with their mode of life that he resolved to enrol himself in their religious family.<sup>2</sup>

On the twenty-fifth of July, 1416, St. James della Marca took the Franciscan habit at St. Mary of the Angels, from the hands of Blessed Nicholas Uzzanio, and went to make his noviciate in the lonely convent of the *Carceri*. He was then in his twenty-fifth year. During his noviciate the servant of God was the admiration of all the religious. No sooner had he entered on religious life, than he began to practise those heroic virtues which shone so brightly in him during the whole course of his long life. Eager for self sacrifice, he took the discipline to blood daily, he constantly wore a coat of mail studded with sharp points, his bed was the bare earth, and his clothing consisted of an old and much patched habit. He also kept the seven Lents observed by St. Francis, and never eat any meat, a little bread and a few herbs sufficed him. His austerities reduced him to such a state of infirmity that St. Bernardine obliged him to moderate them. St. James della Marca was above all things a man of prayer. He was satisfied with three hours of sleep and he devoted the rest of the night to meditation on the sufferings of our Lord. In this heavenly converse with God, he acquired those lights and that superhuman courage of which he gave such proofs amidst the immense labours and the wonderful works which filled his whole life. His biographers make special mention of his profound humility and his obedience, his charity for his brethren and his love for the Blessed Virgin. Every day he devoutly recited her Office and the Crown of her Seven Joys. Such was this great Saint, the worthy rival of so many other courageous labourers whom God sent into His Church during the terrible trial which she underwent in the fifteenth century.

After having made his profession at St. Mary of the

<sup>2</sup> Gonzaga, p. 226. Hueber, p. 2219.

Angels, about the month of July, 1417, St. James della Marca studied theology with St. John Capistran, who had entered the Order two months after himself. St. Bernardine of Siena had for some time the charge of initiating them into all the mysteries of sacred science, he was their first lecturer, and the disciples were worthy of their master. Then began that intimate and holy friendship which united these three great apostles, the corner stones of the Observance. Our Saint was ordained priest three days after his profession, and celebrated his first Mass at St. Saviour's Convent, near Florence, on the thirteenth of July, 1420.<sup>3</sup> He was then twenty-nine. James was already a marvel of sanctity, and he possessed in a very high degree the knowledge which tends to edification. And therefore, as soon as he had received priest's orders, he was appointed to preach by St. Bernardine, who had just been made Commissary General of the Observance in Italy.

From this time he began his apostolic ministry which he carried on with unwearied courage for more than fifty years. It will be seen how he travelled through all the provinces of Italy in succession, through Russia, Norway, Denmark, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Prussia, Austria, Bosnia, Transylvania, Dalmatia, Albania, everywhere converting sinners and infidels and bringing back countless heretics to the Faith. Seven Sovereign Pontiffs<sup>4</sup> appointed him Apostolic Nuncio, at one time to preach a crusade against the Turks, then again to refute the errors of the Fratricelli, the Manichæans, Patarins, Hussites or Taborites. The churches were insufficient to hold the crowds that came to hear him, and he had to address them in the public squares. His preaching was accompanied by the most astounding miracles,

<sup>3</sup> Father Louis Pulinari, in his manuscript Chronicle of the Province of Tuscany. Some believe that he was living in the convent at Fiesole, and that he celebrated his first Mass there.

<sup>4</sup> Martin V., Eugenius IV., Nicholas V., Calixtus III., Pius II., Paul II., and Sixtus IV.

among which were several cases of the dead being raised to life. The fruits of his apostolate were truly prodigious. In Italy, St. James della Marca completely rooted out the sect of the Fratricelli. In the kingdom of Hungary alone he converted fifty thousand heretics,<sup>5</sup> and fifty-five thousand schismatics,<sup>6</sup> and in Norway he baptized two hundred thousand infidels.<sup>7</sup>

We can but take a glance at the immense labours accomplished by St. James della Marca during his fifty years of apostleship. In 1426, our Saint was associated with St. John Capistran, by the command of Martin V., for the purpose of combating the infamous sect of the Fratricelli, a very scourge of religion and society. He went to the province of the Marches where these sectarians had taken refuge, and attacked them in his discourses and his writings with a burning zeal which was constantly enkindled by his love for souls. His apostolic heart had the consolation of bringing back great numbers into the fold of Jesus Christ. Having fulfilled this mission, the Saint evangelized several towns in the province, and restored peace to the town of Ancona which had been torn by factions and quarrels. But Italy was too small a field for the zeal which devoured the soul of our Saint. He felt that he was inspired by God to go to other countries to preach His Kingdom. So after taking counsel with his master, St. Bernardine, he proceeded to Germany, in the year 1427. He preached at Flavia, Vienna, Nuremburg, Augsburg, Ratisbon, and Ulm. His apostolic teaching was ever accompanied by striking miracles which he wrought in the Holy Name of Jesus. Multitudes of heretics and sinners came back to the paths of truth and virtue. More than two hundred young men were induced by his preaching and example to renounce the world in order to embrace the Franciscan Rule, inso-

<sup>5</sup> See the lesson in his Office.

<sup>6</sup> His Life, by Father Joseph Arcangelo of Fratta Maggiore.

<sup>7</sup> See the lesson of his Office.

much that he was obliged to found a convent of the Order at Flavia.

These great victories over error drew down on our Saint the implacable hatred of some of the most obstinate heretics, and they plotted his death. One day, when the man of God was more than usually exhausted by his incessant labours, they presented themselves before him, and with affected compassion offered him some food which, they said, they had prepared to revive him. The good Catholics present thought that this delicate attention was a sign of the sincere conversion of the heretics, but the Saint, warned by revelation of his enemies' wicked purpose, made the sign of the Cross over the food presented to him, and immediately the dish broke and its contents were spilt on the ground. A dog eat part of it and immediately died poisoned. At the sight of this miracle, the heretics acknowledged that the Hand of God was with the Saint, they fell at his feet, asked forgiveness for their crime, and contrite and penitent re-entered the pale of the Church.

From this moment, says his biographer, the miracles of the Saint became more frequent and more numerous, and multitudes of sinners were converted, as well as heretics of every sect. The unwearied apostle evangelized the town of Brandenburg, that of Limburg where he founded two convents of his Order, and then went on to Frankfort in which city more than thirty thousand came to hear him, he put a stop to the divisions which existed among the inhabitants, and he sustained a public disputation with the Jews and converted a great number of them.

After reaping so consoling a harvest in Germany, St. James della Marca turned his steps towards Pomerania. The journey was long and painful, along steep and almost impassable ways. We must remember that the Saint made all his journeys on foot, and never abated any of his austerities. In these vast countries he found a multitude of Jews and a still larger number of Manichæans. The latter



had taken the name of Patarins. Moved by zeal for the honour of God and for the salvation of these poor souls, the holy apostle first began to preach to the heretics, he refuted their errors with sound doctrine and by means of Holy Scripture which he handled with remarkable ability. The Patarins came to hear the new preacher. They could not help admiring his vigorous and persuasive eloquence, they acknowledged that they had nothing to say in reply to his arguments, nevertheless their hearts remained unconvinced and confirmed in error. The Saint was obliged to have recourse to miracles to triumph over their obstinacy. At last he had the consolation of seeing them give up their errors and embrace the Catholic Faith. He afterwards held public disputations with the Jews and utterly confounded them, without, however, the same results as in the case of the heretics.

Ever desirous of effecting fresh conquests for his Divine Master, James della Marca now went on to Norway and Denmark. In these two kingdoms he found whole populations shrouded in the densest idolatry. Moved with pity for these poor souls, St. James preached the great mysteries of the Christian Religion, and the poor idolaters, touched by grace, opened their eyes to the light of truth. They were converted in such great numbers that, on one day, a hundred thousand were baptized, and a hundred thousand more during the following days. In order to maintain the good work done in these countries, the Saint founded two convents of the Observance and left therein some of the holiest and most learned of his companions.

After leaving Denmark, St. James della Marca travelled through Russia and Poland. In these countries he wrought numerous miracles in the Name of Jesus, and gained many victories over the powers of Hell by converting a multitude of sinners and heretics. In 1430, the holy apostle entered Bohemia and proceeded to the city of Prague, the capital of the kingdom. There the disciples of John Huss and Jerome

of Prague had established their head quarters, and, so to speak, the bulwark of their sect. The apostle was not unaware of the dangers to which he would be exposed in this city, but more anxious for the salvation of souls than for his own safety, he never hesitated for an instant, and made his appearance in the principal square of the city in order to combat the triumphant heretics face to face. Attracted by the Saint's reputation and by his rare eloquence, the Hussites flocked in great numbers to hear him preach, but without any desire of reaping benefit for their souls. They went home again full of admiration for the orator, but in no wise converted.

Seeing their obstinacy, the saintly preacher reprimanded them severely for their hardness of heart and their perverse will. The heretics replied that they were ready to give in, if he could show them one of the signs which our Lord promised to His disciples for the confirmation of the preaching of the Gospel. And as their sole object in this was his death, they proposed that he should take a poisoned draught, and they promised that if it did him no harm, they would abjure their heresy and embrace his doctrine. The Saint accepted their proposal. He raised his heart to God and humbly prayed that He would fulfil His promises, then he made the sign of the Cross over the poisoned drink which was presented to him, and, perfectly unmoved, drained the cup to the dregs. He then ascended the pulpit and preached with so much force, and spoke such wonderful words on the truth of Catholic dogma that the heretics acknowledged themselves vanquished, they declared their detestation of their errors, and solemnly promised that they would never again deviate from the teaching of the Roman Church.

One day when St. James della Marca was in the pulpit, a celebrated magician, instigated by the chiefs of the sect, rose in the midst of the congregation and proposed to have a public discussion with him. The Saint, in a short prayer, invoked the aid of the Most High, and replied that he was

ready to satisfy him if he liked to state his difficulties. But the Hand of God came down heavily on the unhappy man, he instantly became deaf and dumb, and fled in confusion. The famous Rokquisane and the other leaders of the sect, alarmed by the conquests of the Saint and by the authority which he had acquired at Prague, saw that nothing but the expulsion of the valiant champion of the truth could avert the utter ruin of the sect.

St. James left Bohemia in 1431, and in answer to an appeal from the Emperor Sigismund, he proceeded to Hungary. He went from town to town in that kingdom and from village to village, extirpating vice, combating heresy, teaching to all the way of truth and virtue, and confirming his mission by miracles. Whole populations followed him wherever he went, and they could not admire enough the depth of his wisdom and the greatness of his virtues. At Buda, the capital of the state, where unbridled luxury and shameful libertinism were rampant, the word of the man of God effected a general reform of manners and a return to a mode of life more conformable to Christian morality.

The following year, 1432, William of Casal, Minister General of the Order, sent St. James into Bosnia, as Visitor and Vicar General, in order to bring about the reform of the Friars Minor, established in that kingdom. The servant of God had to contend against the King of Bosnia, who carried complaints against him to the Pope and the Emperor, accusing him of indiscreet zeal and of exaggerated strictness. But our Saint did not care for any hindrances and laboured for two years at the work of the Reform. He did away with all abuses contrary to the Rule, and established the Observance in all the convents of the Order.

On his return to Italy, in 1434, he proceeded to Rome to give an account of his stewardship to the Minister General. Then, in company with Blessed Nicholas of Osimo, he went to pay his homage at the feet of the Vicar of Jesus Christ,

who was at that time at Florence. Eugenius IV. had long conferences with the Saint, and asked his counsel and advice. His presence was a matter of great consolation to the Holy Father amid the trials which he had to undergo. He sent him again to Bosnia, with the title of Apostolic Reformer, and provided with ample powers to strengthen the Reform of the Order, and to labour for the extirpation of the Manichæan heresy. The King of Bosnia who secretly favoured the heretics, dared not openly oppose the Saint's mission, for fear of drawing down on himself the indignation of both Pope and Emperor, but, while keeping in the background, he continued to raise difficulties in the way. The apostle set resolutely to work. His preaching, accompanied as it was by numerous miracles, brought back a multitude of souls who had been led astray by the sophisms of error. Exasperated at his successes, the leaders of the sect used all their endeavours to traduce the saint and paralyze his ministry. They spared neither abuse nor calumny. He was represented to the king as an imposter, a disturber of the public peace, an enemy of the State. They sought to stir up the populace against him, and to prejudice even the ecclesiastical authorities against him. Things came to such a pass, that our Saint, seeing himself powerless to carry on the mission, thought of quitting Bosnia in order to bear the message of the Gospel to other lands.

When informed of the Saint's intention, the King of Bosnia, being afraid lest he should lay his complaints before the Pope and Emperor, sent him a most pressing letter, with all speed, to induce him to change his mind. St. James della Marca was not deceived by the king's fine words, nevertheless he returned to Bosnia and went straight to the Court, where he was received with every appearance of the greatest respect. The courageous apostle spoke to the king with holy freedom, reproached him to his face for his duplicity, and taxed him with having continually put hindrances in the way of his ministry. He showed him that the



Manichæan doctrine was directly opposed to the dogmas of the Church, and that it was shameful for a sovereign who called himself a Christian not to protect the faith of the Church of Rome in his dominions. He demonstrated the falsity of the Manichæan teaching and the villany of its professors. And finally he announced to the king that after the tragic death which was awaiting him, he would have to render an account to God of all his duplicity and double dealing.

The king seemed to be moved by the words of the Franciscan apostle, but his heart was in no way changed. The sectarians went on with their plots against the valiant champion of the truth. In a public disputation, which they had themselves provoked, he exposed the monstrosity of their doctrines, and showed that, despite their honeyed words, they had the gall of the dragon in their hearts and the venom of the serpent on their lips. Then these agents of Satan, seeing themselves unmasked, and unable to answer the clear arguments of the Saint, poured out insults, sarcasms and calumnies against him, and, finally, in order to silence him lest he should destroy their sect, they resolved to take his life.

They applied to the queen, who was a supporter of heresy and the mortal enemy of the Saint. She took up their wicked suggestion and even undertook to carry it out. She requested St. James to come to the palace, under the pretext of wishing to speak to him on important business, and, meanwhile, four hired assassins were posted on the road by which he had to pass, with orders to put him to death. The Saint accepted the queen's invitation, and was going unsuspectingly on his way, when he saw the four assassins approaching, armed with daggers, and ready to fall on him like wild beasts. A supernatural insight revealed to him their secret plot, he stretched forth his arms towards them and said with great gentleness. "Do to me whatever it is permitted to you to do, I am ready to suffer death for the love of God

and in defence of His Faith. I know who has sent you, if you are permitted so to do, obey the unhappy woman who has given you this order." The assassins were thunderstruck at the words of the Saint, and were seized with the most frightful pains, they threw themselves at his feet, and with groans and tears implored his forgiveness. The Saint pardoned them, made the sign of the Cross over them, and sent them away cured. He then proceeded to the palace. The queen, who was impatiently awaiting the news of his death, turned pale on seeing him appear, and was terrified when he upbraided her in presence of the Court, with the wicked attempt of which she herself had been the instigator.

This miracle served to increase the authority of the Saint over the people. As to the leaders of the sect they were but the more furiously determined on his destruction. One day, when he was to preach against their errors in presence of a vast crowd, they caused the four pillars which supported the pulpit to be cleverly sawn through, in the hope that when he mounted it a serious accident might happen to him. But, once again, their malice turned to their own confusion. When the time arrived for the sermon, St. James, who knew all by revelation, refused to ascend the pulpit, and disclosed to his audience the infamous plot which the heretics had planned. In this second mission in Bosnia, St. James brought back a great number of souls to the fold of Jesus Christ, he also confirmed the Reform in the Franciscan Convents in the kingdom which had passed over to the family of the Observance. In the last months of the year 1435, our Saint went to Moravia at the summons of the Emperor Sigismund. Nevertheless he retained for two years longer the title of Vicar of the Observance, in Bosnia.

For long years Bohemia had been undermined by the errors of John Huss and had separated itself from Rome and shaken off the authority of its legitimate sovereign, the Emperor Sigismund. In 1435, Sigismund at last obtained the submission of the kingdom and its return to obedience

towards the Roman Pontiff. In order to render this treaty of peace and union more solemn and more durable, Sigismund convoked a congress at Inglavia, a town in Moravia, and requested the presence of St. James della Marca, whose sanctity and whose great lights he appreciated in a very high degree. The servant of God was in fact the soul of this imposing assembly, and its decisions were most profitable to the Church.

Sigismund, when once acknowledged as legitimate sovereign of Bohemia, proceeded to that kingdom, accompanied by our Saint, and took possession thereof on the twenty-fourth of August, 1436, amid the rejoicing of the people. But in spite of this happy event, Sigismund and St. James della Marca were deeply grieved at the sight of the destruction which heresy had caused in the midst of this unfortunate country. Catholic priests and religious had almost totally disappeared, the convents had been destroyed or transformed into secular dwellings, the churches were converted to profane uses, and those which still remained were defiled by the sacrilegious worship of the heresiarch John Huss. St. James della Marca set to work at once, and, with the aid and support of the emperor, he re-established Catholic worship in Prague and in the rest of Bohemia. The churches were opened and re-consecrated, Catholic priests were ordained, and the discipline of the Church everywhere restored. So happy a result filled the heart of the Sovereign Pontiff with consolation, and was a cause of joy to Catholic Princes and to all Christendom. St. James della Marca was saluted by all as an apostle, powerful in deeds and in words, and as the friend of God indeed.

Meanwhile the Hussites and Taborites were chafing with rage at the spectacle of the Catholic Church rising up again upon the ruins of their sect. Like demons let loose, they poured maledictions on the Bohemian deputies who had signed the treaty of Inglavia. After having deliberated in

their conventicles, they recognized their powerlessness to struggle against the Catholic Sovereign whom their country had just acknowledged, and they resolved to go into Hungary and the various provinces of Austria. As soon as the emperor had learnt that these heretics were carrying their wicked doctrines to other states, he made haste to inform the Sovereign Pontiff, and Eugenius IV. constituted our Saint Inquisitor General in Hungary and Austria.

St. James della Marca was occupied for more than two years in combating and uprooting heresy in these countries. It would be impossible to enumerate here the prodigious labours of the Franciscan Apostle, it is enough to say that the number of heretics and schismatics converted by his teaching and his miracles is incalculable. In Hungary, in one single day, he reconciled fifty-thousand heretics to the Church, and in the following days fifty-thousand schismatics. The sectarians were vanquished, and those who remained obstinate had to hide themselves or to fly the country. The work done by our Saint for the glory of God, the advancement of the Church, and the good of souls, was so wonderful that the prelates of Hungary and Austria wrote to the Pope concerning it, in order to console his heart and to extol the merit of the incomparable apostle whom he had sent to them.

In 1438, the grand assizes of Christendom were held at Ferrara. Eugenius IV. summoned thither St. James della Marca, and kept him near his person for several months, he then sent him back to Hungary to consolidate the good he had already effected. The Emperor Albert, the successor of Sigismund, was delighted at the Saint's return into his kingdom, he welcomed him with great marks of respect, and promised him his support in the accomplishment of his apostolic ministry. Our Saint went on, therefore, with his preaching. At Buda, the capital of Hungary, he appeased a bloody riot at the risk of his life. At last, towards the year 1440, he became so enfeebled by his incessant fatigues



that he was obliged to leave Germany and return to Italy.

St. James had spent about twelve years in evangelizing Norway, Denmark, Bosnia, Poland, Hungary, Austria and the other provinces of Germany. He had overthrown the enemies of the Faith, everywhere destroyed heresy, exterminated vice, restored peace among the different populations, and won a countless number of souls to Jesus Christ. And now, during thirty six years, Italy was to be the principal field of his apostolate.

At this period, the family of the Observance had revived the first ages of the Seraphic Order in the Church. A multitude of Saints and apostolic men were to be reckoned among its members. Of those in Italy, whom the Church has placed on her Altars, were Blessed Thomas of Florence, Blessed Antony of Stroncone, Blessed Herculanus, Blessed Matthew of Girgenti, Blessed Gabriel Ferretti, Blessed Arcangelo of Calatafimi, Blessed Mark of Bologna, and others, and at their head there shone with a bright particular splendour St. Bernardine of Siena, St. John Capistran, Blessed Albert of Sartiano, and our Saint, who is justly considered as one of the four pillars of the Observance. From the year 1431 to the year 1439, St. John Capistran had presided over the government of this Religious Family with the authority of Commissary Apostolic. At the time that our Saint returned to his native country, St. Bernardine of Siena was at the head of the Cismontane Observance as Vicar General. The labours in Italy of St. James della Marca were destined to contribute very powerfully indeed to the progress of the Observance in the bosom of this most privileged of all nations.

St. James della Marca preached first at Venice and then at Padua, in presence of immense crowds, his words brought forth marvellous fruits unto salvation. At this period, the Saint obtained leave from Eugenius IV. to accompany Blessed James Primadizzi to the East, to labour there for

the conversion of schismatics and infidels, but on his arrival at Cyprus he was attacked by a serious illness which obliged him to return to Italy. He went by way of Loreto, and our Lady restored him to health. In the year 1441, Eugenius IV. appointed our Saint Inquisitor against the Fratricelli, and afterwards sent him as Apostolic Nuncio to the Patriarchate of Aquileja, in company with Blessed Albert of Sartiano, to preach a Crusade against the Turks. It was at the cost of immense toil but with his usual success that the Saint accomplished both his missions. On his return from Aquileja, he had to cross the Po, and as the ferryman refused to give him a passage out of charity, the servant of God spread his mantle on the river and it served as a boat to carry him and his companion across to the opposite bank. Thus was our Lord pleased once again to reward the filial confidence of His servants and their faithfulness in keeping the Rule of their Seraphic Patriarch.<sup>8</sup>

Up to the year 1449, the indefatigable missionary was employed in evangelizing the cities and small towns of Umbria and Spoleto. Wherever he went he converted sinners, reconciled heretics to the Church, and put an end to hatred and strife. In the beginning of May, 1444, he was staying in the convent on the Lake of Trasimeno, where he met St. Bernardine of Siena and St. John Capistran, then Vicar General of the Observance. This was the last time that these three great servants of God were to meet together on earth. They conversed concerning the things of God, the salvation of souls and the interests of the Church, and they spoke with that holy passion for God's glory which was the one motive and object of their lives. After this interview, St. John Capistran continued his journey to Sicily where he was sent as Apostolic Nuncio, and St. Bernardine proceeded to the kingdom of Naples, and halted at Aquila where he was to end his holy and laborious career.

<sup>8</sup> A similar miracle was wrought by St. Bernardine of Siena, St. John Capistran, St. Francis Solano and other Saints of the Seraphic Order.

At the moment that his beloved master was breathing his last at Aquila, St. James della Marca was preaching at Todi in the public square, in the presence of a great crowd. He stopped short in the midst of his discourse and remained for some time motionless, to the great surprise of his audience, when he came to himself he exclaimed, "O my dear people, let us weep and lament! At this very time a great pillar of Holy Church has disappeared. The brightest star of Italy has just gone out." He then took with him his two companions and went to Aquila in order to pray and mourn by the tomb where his master and father lay. St. James della Marca joined St. John Capistran in praying the Sovereign Pontiff to canonize Bernardine, the indefatigable propagator of the Observance and the Apostle of Italy.

St. John Capistran and St. James della Marca had already done battle against the infamous sect of the Fratricelli, but the heresy, suppressed for a time, sprang up again more vigorous and more threatening than ever. Extinguished in one province it reappeared in another, and the Saint had to return again and again to the charge to prevent souls being poisoned thereby. In 1449, the Fratricelli took refuge in the Marches, and Pope Nicholas V., wishing to provide a remedy against the contagion of their errors, made our Saint Vicar Provincial of the Observance in the Province of the Marches, and at the same time appointed him Inquisitor General against the heretics. The holy missionary, as a true son of obedience, set to work at once, he went through the streets of all the cities and villages of the province, combating heresy and pursuing it to its last entrenchments. Our Lord blessed the zeal of His apostle, the impure sect was completely uprooted, and not a single vestige of it remained in Italy.

Not content with waging war against heresy, St. James della Marca attacked the vices of his time and effected a general reformation in public morals. Preaching at Matelica he inveighed vehemently against the vice of impurity which

reigned in the town. Touched by his exhortations, the inhabitants showed a sincere repentance for their sins and returned to a life more conformable to the law of God. One man alone resisted the workings of grace, and, far from amending his ways, he conceived the wicked project of assassinating the man of God. With this design he took a dagger, proceeded to a road by which the Saint was to pass, and posted himself behind a wall on which a picture of the Blessed Virgin was painted. As soon as the assassin saw the holy missionary approach, he rose up to rush upon him and stab him. At the same moment, he saw the picture of our Lady cast an indignant look at him, and he heard a terrible voice saying, "Wretch, what are you about to do in my presence? Do you mean to kill my servant and the servant of God." The wretched man was thunderstruck at these words and fell senseless to the ground, and the Saint, who had observed nothing, peacefully continued his way. Next morning the assassin was found stretched half dead on the ground, he was carried to the hospital of the town. Some time afterwards he recovered his health, he then went to Fermo where the Saint was preaching, threw himself at his feet, confessed his crime with true penitence, and was reconciled to God.

Whilst he was Provincial, St. James della Marca took the greatest care to maintain the Rule with the utmost purity among his brethren. He added five new convents to his Province, one of which was founded at his native place Monte Prandone. A great consolation awaited him amid his incessant labours. The canonization of St. Bernardine of Siena took place at Rome on the Feast of Pentecost, 1450. The solemnity was celebrated with great pomp and splendour in the presence of an immense concourse of pilgrims, brought together from all parts of the world, on the occasion of the Jubilee year. St. John Capistran, at this time Vicar General of the Cismontane Observance, convoked all the Friars of the Observance, both Ultra-



montane and Cismontane, in order to add greater lustre to the function. Four thousand religious answered his appeal. St. James della Marca came too, to assist at the triumph of his beloved Father. It was a day of rejoicing for all the Friars Minor, but none among them felt greater joy and consolation than St. John Capistran and St. James della Marca, the two most eminent of Bernardine's disciples and his fellow workers in his providential mission.

In the year 1452, our Saint, now relieved of his charge as Provincial, heard that the Manichæans were again astir in Bosnia, and were even spreading their poisonous doctrines in Dalmatia. Moved with compassion for the people whom he had formerly evangelized with such abundant fruit, he obtained leave from Blessed Mark of Bologna, Vicar General of the Observance, to visit these countries. Before reaching Bosnia, he was rejoiced to learn that thanks to the zeal of the apostolic legate, religious matters were much improved, and that the new king, a convert to the Catholic Faith, was carefully seeking to drive all danger of false doctrine out of his kingdom. At the same time, the Saint received a letter from blessed Mark of Bologna, bidding him go to preside over the Chapter of the Province of Dalmatia.

On the receipt of this letter from his Superior, the Saint started for Dalmatia, he passed through Albania, and stopped at Ragusa. The people came in crowds to meet him wherever he passed, and welcomed him as an Angel from God, and their faith was rewarded by the numerous miracles which he wrought for them. During his stay at the convent of Ragusa, he advised the religious to place on either side of the High Altar, a statue of an adoring angel, censer in hand. The Saint's advice was immediately acted upon, he then said to the religious, "Some day, these angels will be seen to do wonderful things." He added that they must be carefully guarded from fire if they were to be preserved. What the Saint foretold, came to pass. On great festivals the two angels were seen to move of themselves and wave

their censers. This miracle was perpetuated for more than two centuries,<sup>9</sup> it ceased in 1663, when the church was destroyed by an earthquake and the two angels were burnt. St. James della Marca was preparing to continue his journey in order to fulfil the mission entrusted to him in the province of Dalmatia, when his increasing infirmities obliged him to return to Italy in 1453.

During the three years which followed, the Saint travelled all through the different provinces of Italy, preaching the Word of God, working miracles and reaping an abundant harvest for Heaven. He preached at Macerata, Ancona, Recanati, Ascoli, Osimo, Aquila and Padua. The people everywhere entreated him to come among them, they went to meet him and welcomed him as a messenger from God. The fervent missionary stopped in the smallest towns as well as in the great cities, anxious to preach the sacred truths to all, and to win every soul to God. There was no rest at all for him, he preached, he heard confessions, he made peace, he founded confraternities, charitable institutions, hospitals, and *Monti di Pietà*.

Our Saint was at Aquila in 1454. St. John Capistran had just addressed a letter, dated from Cracow, to the people of the place. In this letter he exhorted them for the second time to build a church in honour of St. Bernardine, the great glory of their city. He reproached them also in severe terms, for their unconcern and ingratitude. This letter, read out publicly, deeply moved the hearers, and the words of James della Marca completed what the letter of Capistran had begun. The Saint was requested to choose the most suitable site in the city and to lay the first stone of the church, which was eventually one of the finest monuments in Italy. While preaching at Padua in 1456, St. James della Marca won over to the Order a young student of that University. After he had clothed him in the Seraphic habit,

<sup>9</sup> Gonzaga speaks of this marvel as continuing in his time. (*De origine seraphicæ Religionis*, p. 484.)

the Saint uttered these prophetic words, "We have this day enrolled a new soldier in the army of Jesus Christ, he will shed a great lustre on our Order, he will most powerfully co-operate to the glory of God and the good of souls, and will batter in breach the empire of Satan." The Saint changed his name from Martin to that of Bernardine, in memory of the great apostle of Italy, and Blessed Bernardine of Feltre continued the great mission of St. Bernardine in Italy. He, too, was to be a minister of Divine Mercy, the apostle of his country and the glory of the Church and the Seraphic Order.

Pope Calixtus III. had just received the news of the celebrated victory of Belgrade, the battle of which St. John Capistran and the famous Hunyadi were the heroes. He learnt at the same time that Mahomet II., irritated at his defeat, was preparing a formidable army to avenge it. The Sovereign Pontiff strongly encouraged all Christian princes to prepare a new crusade. He sent St. James della Marca as legate to the Marches and the duchy of Spoleto, to promote the cause of the holy war and to collect subsidies. Our Saint, without a moment's delay, went to visit these provinces. His preaching awoke enthusiasm in every heart, and his success brought consolation to the heart of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

During this course of preaching, St. James della Marca stopped at Ancona, with Blessed George Albanais, to assist his disciple Blessed Gabriel Ferretti in his last moments. "My dear friends and brothers," said the dying Saint, "rejoice and leap for joy for your names are written in Heaven." Our Saint, who knew most thoroughly the eminent virtues of Blessed Gabriel, was deputed to deliver his funeral oration. Soon after this Calixtus III. was deeply afflicted to hear of the death of John Capistran, which happened on the twenty-third of October, 1456. He at once sought to find a religious capable of carrying on the mission of John Capistran in Hungary. No one seemed to

him to be better fitted for the great undertaking than St. James della Marca, the companion and fellow worker of St. John Capistran. At the bidding of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, our Saint at once started for Hungary as Apostolic Nuncio. Neither age nor infirmity could arrest the steps of the champion of the faith. On his entry into Hungary, he was received by the population as a Saint, a messenger from God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ. When he arrived at a spot some miles from the royal residence, the king and the nobles of his court, the bishop with his clergy, and a great throng of people came to meet him, singing hymns and canticles. The lowly disciple of St. Francis, fully sensible of his own nothingness, referred all the honour and glory to God alone.

Without any delay, the Saint set bravely to work at his mission. He called together the people, he incited the princes to take up arms. At a meeting of the chief people of the country held at Buda under the presidency of the king, he smoothed away difficulties, convinced all present, and kindled in every heart the desire for the holy war. And lastly he organized a league of Christian princes so as to oppose a barrier against the torrent which threatened to overwhelm Christendom. In his journeys across Sclavonia, James della Marca visited the tomb of his holy friend John Capistran, and collected details of the miracles which were to serve for the Process of his canonization. However in the midst of his unremitting labours, our Saint felt that his infirmities were increasing considerably and he was forced to return to Italy. He entrusted his mission to a former companion of St. John Capistran, Father John Tagliacozzo, a religious eminent for both learning and sanctity. It was in the year 1458, and James della Marca went straight to Rome to give an account of his labours to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Calixtus III. heard with joy of all that had been done in Hungary in preparation for the crusade, and gave our Saint many proofs of fatherly affection. As soon as his



arrival in Italy was known, a great number of towns disputed the honour of having him, everyone was eager to see and hear him. The inhabitants of Fermo appealed to Pius II., who had just succeeded Calixtus III., and obtained that the great apostle should preach for them during Lent of the year 1459. The success of his preaching was immense, no church was large enough to hold his hearers, and the Saint was forced to address them in a vast open space. Wonderful conversions speedily crowned the efforts of the apostle, abuses were reformed and religious practices again held in honour. Fermo became a truly Christian and fervent city. Thence, James della Marca bore to other cities the torch of his burning eloquence. Pius II. made him Apostolic Nuncio in the Marches of Ancona, and then commanded him to preach the crusade throughout Italy in 1459.

His preaching at Milan worked a general reformation in public morals. A sermon on St. Mary Magdalene converted thirty-six women of bad life, whose tears and sobs deeply moved the congregation. He preached a second time at Milan in 1461, God alone knows with what success. Indeed the See of Milan having become vacant by the death of the Archbishop, the clergy begged to have the Saint as their pastor. But the most pressing entreaties did not avail to conquer the resistance of the humble apostle whose mission could not be restricted to the narrow limits of a diocese.

During Lent of 1462, St. James della Marca evangelized the town of Brescia. His preaching was so fruitful that the repentance of Ninive seemed to be renewed in this city. It was God's Will to glorify His servant by a signal miracle on this occasion.

A pious inhabitant of Brescia who had the affection of a son for the holy preacher, frequently sent to him his little boy, Conrad, with certain things that he might need. The Saint, either from gratitude or because of the child's good dispositions, sometimes kept him with him to instruct him in Christian doctrine and teach him devout prayers.

He had specially enjoined him to say an *Ave Maria* each time he passed an image of our Blessed Lady. Conrad faithfully followed the Saint's advice, and, moreover, he taught a little friend, the son of a Jew in the neighbourhood, to recite the Hail Mary, and it was the delight of these two children to repeat it together before the image of Mary. The Jew became aware of it and was very angry with his son, and expressly forbade him to consort any longer with the little Christian. In spite of this prohibition, the two children continued to meet in secret, and one day the Jew surprised them on their knees reciting the prayer to our Lady. At this sight, he fell into such a violent passion that he seized hold of little Conrad and strangled him, and then hid the body in a recess made in his chimney, which he had walled up, having blackened the surface so as to prevent suspicion being roused. Thus his crime was not discovered.

However Conrad's father seeing that he did not return, sought for him for two days among his friends and relations, but of course his researches were fruitless. In an agony of grief he went to the Saint to tell him of the blow which had fallen on him. The man of God shared his grief, but did his best to console him, exhorted him to put his trust in God, and promised not only to pray for him, but to speak of his loss from the pulpit so as to facilitate the search. Then the Saint had recourse to prayer and learnt by revelation all that had happened. Next morning, the child's father went to hear the sermon and was very much surprised that the preacher did not say a single word about his boy. After the sermon he went to him to complain, but when the Saint saw him coming he seemed quite joyous, and putting his hand on his shoulder, he said, "Be of good courage, take comfort, your boy will soon be restored to you safe and sound, but, all the same, you will not obtain this grace unless you promise, for the love of God, to forgive those who have done you harm." The child's father willingly gave the promise required. Then the Saint went with him

and two other persons to the Jew's house, he introduced himself as having come on important business, and the Jew made them sit down by the fire. Suddenly the Saint pointed to the spot where the body of the child was concealed, and desired that the partition-wall should be demolished. At the first blows the child was heard to cry, "Pray knock gently so as not to hurt me." The Saint then drew near and told him to come to him, Conrad appeared and threw himself into his arms. The father was beside himself with joy at the sight of the miracle and sincerely forgave the murderer of his child. The Jew was appalled and fell at the feet of the Saint, confessed his crime and begged to be baptized with all his family.

God allows his most faithful servants to be tried by the fire of tribulation, and our Saint had to pass through the crucible. During his course of preaching at Brescia, he was accused of heresy, and cited to appear before the Inquisitor of the faith. After mature examination, the Sovereign Pontiff proclaimed his innocence and the purity of his faith.

During the latter years of his life, St. James della Marca was constantly travelling over the various provinces of Italy, in the exercise of his apostolic ministry. He preached at Venice, Ancona, Rome, Ascoli, Civitella and a number of other towns, working miracles everywhere, and bringing back souls to God. His zeal never slackened notwithstanding his many infirmities. One of his works was to establish in many towns the highly popular institution of the *Monti di pietà*, begun in Italy by Father Barnaby of Terni, to protect the poor against the usury of the Jews. We have already spoken of the unwearied zeal with which the Friars Minor of the Observance, and Blessed Bernardine of Feltre, in particular, thus helped the cause of the poor and the distressed workman.

To St. James della Marca was accorded the gift of prophecy. We may mention a single instance of this out of many others. In 1464, the General Chapter of the Order

was assembled at Perugia for the election of the Minister General. The voters not being agreed in their choice had recourse to our Saint, they urgently entreated him to point out the man whom he deemed most worthy of the office. "There is Father Francis Savona," he replied, "who will be made a Cardinal some day and who will become Pope." Francis of Savona was then unanimously elected. Afterwards he was indeed raised to the cardinalate, and finally to the Papacy in 1471. Our Saint witnessed the realization of his prophecy, and ended his laborious career under this Pontificate.

Ferdinand I., King of Naples, was extremely desirous that St. James should come to his States, and to this effect he applied, in 1472, to Sixtus IV. At the command of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Saint, who was at that time ill at Fermo, immediately started on his way to Naples. Blessed Bernardine of Feltre, who had come to visit him with his Provincial, Blessed Louis Gonzaga, was present when he received the Pope's letter, and the two great servants of God were greatly edified by the heroic obedience of the holy old man. On his arrival at Naples, he told his companion that he should never again see his native land, for that he would die in that city. The King received the man of God with the-greatest marks of reverence, he would have had him lodge in the palace, but the Saint obtained leave to stay with his brethren.

The four last years of the life of St. James della Marca were employed in evangelizing the city of Naples and the surrounding country. His preaching was accompanied by numerous and striking miracles. He cured the King and the heir apparent of fatal illness. The Neapolitans listened to his words as to those of a messenger from God, and the city was very soon entirely transformed, vice was banished, Christian customs restored, and religion again held in honour. These were the happy results of the fruitful apostolate of the son of St. Francis. And now the hour of



reward was come for this faithful and untiring servant of Holy Church. In his last moments he asked pardon from his brethren for any trouble which he might have caused them, he exhorted them to perseverance in the pure observance of their holy Rule, and then, after receiving the Last Sacraments with angelic piety, he slept the sleep of the just. This was on the twenty-eighth of November, 1476. He was eighty-five years old, and he had passed sixty years in religion.

St. James della Marca was buried in the church of the Observance at Naples, known by the name of *Santa Maria Nuova*. Countless miracles were obtained by his intercession, and to this day his body remains intact, flexible, and gives forth a celestial odour. This great servant of God was canonized by Benedict XIII. on the tenth of December, 1726. (His feast is celebrated on this day throughout the Order.)

Gemma lucens paupertatis,  
Rosa rubens caritatis,  
Martyr desiderio,  
Vas totius puritatis,  
Speculumque castitatis,  
Picænorum glôria.

Bright jewel of poverty,  
Glowing rose of charity,  
Martyr in desire,  
Vessel of all purity,  
And mirror of chastity,  
Glory of Picenum.

Decus morum et Minorum,  
Prædicator Verbi Dei,  
Extirpator hæresum,  
Tu forma sanctitatis,  
Jacobe beatissime,  
Ora pro nobis Dominum.

Ornament to morals, and to the  
Friars Minor,  
Preacher of the Word of God,  
Destroyer of heresies,  
Thou example of sanctity,  
Most blessed James,  
Pray to the Lord for us.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This anthem, approved by Pope Leo X., is sung daily at the tomb of the Saint.

NOVEMBER 29.

*All the Saints of the Seraphic Order.*

THE Order of St. Francis, illuminated and enkindled by the virtues of its glorious Founder, has ever been a very mine of sanctity. The Menology of Father Hueber gives us the names of six thousand martyrs, confessors, virgins or widows, taken from the bosom of the Franciscan family, whose virtues it has been God's Will to make known even in this world, and often by striking miracles.<sup>1</sup> But who can tell

<sup>1</sup> Of these, two hundred and fifty-two receive public worship; ninety-one belong to the Third Order, twenty-two to the Second Order, and one hundred and thirty-nine to the First Order. Of those in the First Order, forty-nine appeared before there was any division, and ninety since. Among the Saints and Blessed who have edified the Church since the division of the Order, seventy-eight belong to the Friars Minor of the Observance, ten to the Capuchins, and two to the Conventuals. Computing the number of Saints and Blessed that the principal nations have given to the Seraphic Order, we find that, Italy has furnished ninety Friars Minor, fifteen Clares and thirty-two Tertiaries; total, one hundred and thirty-seven. Spain and Portugal, twenty-six Friars Minor and three Tertiaries: total, twenty-nine. Japan, twenty-four Friars Minor and forty-four Tertiaries; total seventy-eight martyrs. France, four Friars Minor, three Clares and eight Tertiaries; total fifteen. Belgium and Holland, twelve martyrs of the First Order. Poland and Germany, five Friars Minor, four Clares and three Tertiaries; total, twelve, etc. Italy, as we see, has furnished more than half the number of these true disciples of St. Francis who have been placed on the altars by the Church. This, the privileged among all nations, was the cradle of the Seraphic Order and here the spirit of the holy Patriarch has ever been faithfully kept, here too the Rule has been best understood and practised in spirit and in truth.

the multitude of the disciples of St. Francis of whom the merits and sacrifices, known only to God and His Angels, shall be revealed at the last day? It is in order to place before our eyes these admirable examples of virtue, that the Church unites in one solemn festival the commemoration of all the Elect whom the Seraphic Order has given to Heaven.

"For we are the children of Saints," said a just man under the Old Law, "and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God."<sup>2</sup> The members of the Franciscan family are also the children and heirs of the Saints. The remembrance of the virtues of their predecessors ought to fill their souls with generous emulation, and the spectacle of their glorious battles ought to remind them of those words which so stirred the soul of St. Augustine, "Why cannot you do that which others have done?"

The Saints, too, are powerful intercessors for their brethren on earth. The Saints of the First Order support their suffrages on our behalf by offering to God their toils in the apostolic ministry, together with the blood which the hand of the executioner, or their own instruments of penance, caused to gush from their veins. The Saints of the Second Order offer to God their prayers, their vigils, their tears, their austerities. The chosen souls of the Third Order offer their faithfulness in the practice of Christian virtues, and the spirit of penance which, perhaps, made their lives one long martyrdom. Therefore on this day we address them in the prayer which the Franciscan liturgy puts into our mouths, "O illustrious Saints, most perfect imitators of Francis, obtain for us that we may be valiant in the battles of the Lord, and fervent in His service here below, so that we may merit to share one day in your beatitude."<sup>3</sup> (This festival is celebrated, on this day, throughout the whole Order as a Double of the Second Class with a Proper Office.)

On this day, Honorius III. confirmed the Rule of the

<sup>2</sup> Tobias viii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> This antiphon is recited at the suffrages.

Friars Minor. A plenary indulgence is granted to the members of the Order who on this day renew their profession, either publicly or privately.

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DECEMBER 5.

*Blessed Humilis of Bisignano, Lay Brother,*

[1582—1637.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minors of the Observance.*

BORN at Bisignano, in Calabria, of parents estimable by their piety, and baptized by the names of Luke Antony, this blessed Saint from the first dawn of reason, showed signs and tokens of the divine charity which prevented and filled his heart. In the seclusion of home, under the guardianship and watchful eyes of his parents, submissive to their wishes and even forestalling them, he kept aloof from the games and childish amusements of his little friends that he might give himself up to prayer and the contemplation of heavenly things. Every day he was present at Mass. As soon as he reached years of discretion, he approached the Holy Table on every feast, and always barefoot, out of reverence and humility. To a great love for the Holy Eucharist, he added frequent meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ. It was his habit when working in the fields or tending sheep, to pray on his knees before a wooden cross, and there to meditate on the sufferings of our Divine Master.

When he was eighteen, he began to consider what kind of life he should lead, which would be most pleasing to our Lord and most conduce to his own salvation. He redoubled his prayers and implored the help of the Saints and especially of our Blessed Lady, and then he felt that he was



called by the Will of God to serve Him among the lay brothers of the Order of St. Francis of Assisi. This filled him with holy joy. Not being able for a long time yet to follow out his vocation, he tried at least to make himself more worthy of this great grace by adapting his manner of life to the Rule which he was to embrace. He soon became the admiration of every one by his diligence in prayer, his edifying fervour at Communion, his promptitude in performing all his duties, his exactness, his discretion in every detail of Christian life. Divine graces, too, showed that his life found favour with God. It was no uncommon thing to see the holy young man, when in prayer or meditation, as if deprived of consciousness and rapt in God in a sweet ecstasy.

Nine years passed away thus, and at last he was allowed to enter the Reformed Observance, at Bisignano. There he soon became in every respect a finished pattern of religious perfection, to be imitated not only by the novices, but even by those who had the experience of age and virtue. His fervour went on increasing after he had made the vows which bound him irrevocably to the Order. Thenceforth his union with God was so complete that amid the most lowly and active employments, that of the quest and working in the garden of the convent, it might yet be said that his conversation was always in Heaven. From his love of God which made the peace of his soul and the dearest delight of his heart, flowed, as if naturally, that charity which urged him to do his utmost to succour his neighbour, both in body and soul.

His great devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God and the great austerities which he practised to keep his body under, won for him that dazzling chastity which transfigured him into an angel in the flesh. Added to these virtues was his predilection, as if inborn, for the strictest poverty as well as for humility, which made him conceive the greatest horror of any mark of respect, and inspired him with

immense contempt for himself. Indeed he looked upon himself as the worst of sinners.

But our Lord, Who exalts the humble and gives understanding to little ones, enlightened the soul of Blessed Humilis with supernatural science. The most learned came to seek the way of salvation and perfection from the light of this science. The fame of his sanctity reached Rome, and the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XV., made him come thither, and received him with great kindness. Urban VIII., also, esteemed him highly and took pleasure in conversing with him frequently. He was, however, obliged to leave Rome to return to his own country because of his health, which had been for some time much shattered. But remedies were of no avail to avert death. The end came. Purified like gold in the crucible by the excruciating sufferings of his last hours, which he bore with unfailing patience, Blessed Brother Humilis took into his hands the image of Jesus Crucified and slept sweetly in the Lord, on the twenty-sixth of November, 1637, at the age of fifty-five. The miracles by which God glorified him, during his life and after his death, having been verified by Pope Pius IX., Leo XIII. enrolled him among the Blessed.<sup>1</sup> (His feast is only kept by the Observance.)

<sup>1</sup> The acts of the Process of Beatification may be consulted about this Saint, and his Life, written by Father Antony Mary of Vicenza, which was published at Bologna in 1872.

DECEMBER 8.

*The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary, Patroness of the Seraphic Order.*

DEVOTION to Mary has been the characteristic of all the Saints, as of all the Religious Orders in the Church. Sprung up in the shadow of a sanctuary dedicated to Mary, the Order of St. Francis was bound to be consecrated to our great Queen. In fact Mary was chosen as the Patroness of the Order, and the children of St. Francis have never ceased to work for the glory of their Queen. Some have taken up their pen to relate in inspired pages her prerogatives and her greatness, others have transmitted to their brethren the fragrance of their devotion, and the testimony of the marvellous favours which the Immaculate Queen of Angels has been pleased to shower on them. And this tender devotion, this childlike trust in Mary, came to them, after the grace of Jesus, from the example of the Seraphic Patriarch. "Francis," says St. Bonaventure, "cherished an unspeakable love for the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. He placed in Her, after Jesus, all his trust, he made her his advocate, and the advocate of all his."<sup>1</sup> Countless are the proofs of the devotion of St. Francis to Mary, countless also are the marks of tenderness which the Mother of God bestowed on her servant. It was at St. Mary of the Angels that the Queen of Heaven granted to the prayers of the devout Pica the birth of this child of miracles, and it was in this blessed sanctuary that, many years later, St. Francis

<sup>1</sup> *Legend* chap. ix.

came to put on the livery of evangelic poverty and to lay the foundations of his Order. There, he wished to live under the wing of Mary, there, marvellous favours were showered on him, there, also, he wished to die to this life and to be born again to the glory of Heaven.

Not satisfied with placing himself and his Order under the patronage of the Mother of God, St. Francis ordained, in the second General Chapter, held in 1219, that every Saturday a solemn Mass in honour of the *Immaculate* Virgin Mary should be celebrated. He thus admitted into his Order the common sentiment of the Church in favour of the Immaculate Conception. Faithful to the teaching of their Father, the Friars Minor have proved themselves, for six centuries, the most devoted and persevering defenders of this glorious privilege of Mary. In 1621, in a General Chapter held at Segovia, the Franciscans of the Observance solemnly renewed the oath, which their forerunners in the Seraphic Order had made, always to maintain the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, and to teach it everywhere to the Christian people. In another General Chapter, held at Toledo in 1645, the Friars Minor of the Observance took Mary under the glorious title of her Immaculate Conception as the Protectress and special Patroness of the whole Order. This example was followed, in 1715, by the Capuchins, and in 1719, by the Conventuals.

The Friars Minor, therefore, laboured with all their strength to defend and foster this belief which had become traditional among them, and for this reason was called the *Franciscan opinion*. We may add that they powerfully contributed to the definition as a dogma of faith. Dom Guéranger speaks in these terms of this glorious mission as fulfilled by the doctors of the Order of St. Francis. "In the first years of the fourteenth century the glorious chair of Duns Scotus was set up, to whom it was reserved, in his turn, to assign, according to scholastic method, the place which the privilege of Mary was to occupy in the general



scheme of Catholic theology. Dating from this period, fresh fervour sprang into life, and the Seraphic Order, faithful to the predilections of its holy Patriarch, took up its stand, once for all, as the official defender of the Immaculate Conception. From this day forth, there was but one concurrence of opinion ever tending to become unanimous, among the Saints, Doctors, Popes, and the faithful, until Sixtus IV., also a son of St. Francis, inaugurated the feast of the Conception in the Roman Church.”<sup>2</sup>

It was to be reserved for another son of St. Francis, for Pius IX., to publish to the whole Church this glorious privilege of the Mother of God, to define as a dogma of faith the universal belief in her Immaculate Conception. It was on the eighth of December, 1854, that the Vicar of Jesus Christ published the dogmatic Bull *Ineffabilis*, amid the exulting joy of all the faithful. But in no portion of the Church was this joy more keenly felt than in the Seraphic Order. Indeed, on the day itself of Mary's triumph, while the Sovereign Pontiff was putting off his sacred vestments, two religious were seen coming towards him, the two heads of the great Family of St. Francis, the Minister General of the Friars Minor of the Observance, and the Minister General of the Conventuals. They knelt at his feet, one holding in his hand a branch of silver lilies, the other a branch of golden lilies, which they presented to the Holy Father, as a slight tribute of the gratitude of the Franciscan Order for the fresh glory which he had just given to the special Patroness of their Institute, by the explicit confirmation set to a belief which had always been the dearest patrimony of its doctors, of its schools, and of its Saints.

“It is impossible,” says St. Bernardine, “for the human understanding, as long as it is confined in a mortal body, to be able to rise as high as the praises of Mary require. This glorious Virgin and Mother of the Most High is above

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoire sur la question de l'Immaculée-Conception*, p. 101. See the Life of Blessed John Duns Scotus, November the third.

all language and all thought. What mortal man, indeed, unless God bestowed on Him supernatural gifts, could speak worthily or even passably of the Mother of the Man God? Or, rather, what mortal man would not fear to sully by the unworthiness of his lips the name of her whom the Father of Mercies, God before all ages, predestinated from all eternity as the Virgin most worthy, Her whom God the Son chose beforehand for His Mother, and whom the Holy Ghost prepared to be the instrument and the channel of fresh grace.<sup>3</sup>

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DECEMBER 9.

*Blessed Jane of Signa, Virgin and Recluse.*

[1244—1307.]

*Of the Third Order.*

JANE was born in the parish of Signa, in the diocese of Florence.<sup>1</sup> Her parents were poor peasants, destitute of this world's goods, but rich in the things of Heaven. God,

<sup>3</sup> II. *Serm. de S. Nomine Mariæ.*

<sup>1</sup> There is but little information extant about the life of Blessed Jane of Signa, all documents having disappeared when the town was burnt by the Lucchese in 1324. In the parish archives is a parchment manuscript entitled *Beata Joannæ vita et miracula*. The legend in the Breviary, when relating the miracles of the Saint, mentions this manuscript. It has been shown to us by the worthy Abate Cardini of Signa, its date is 1374. It is the oldest and almost the only document that we have referring to Blessed Jane. The anonymous writer relates a certain number of miracles but hardly any details of her life. Dom Razzi, in his *lives of the Tuscan Saints*, and a biography of Blessed Jane, published at Florence, in 1818, are satisfied with reproducing some of the facts related in the manuscript of the fourteenth century. Some of our annalists, Wadding, Mazzara, Terrinca, the Martyrology and the Menologium of the Order, likewise mention Blessed Jane of Signa.

Who takes delight in exalting the humble, cast a look of mercy on her, and willed to make her an instrument of good to many. Faithful to the teaching and example of her good parents, Jane was remarkable from her childhood for her modesty, piety, and all the virtues which make a Saint. From a very early age she spent her days in the fields tending sheep, and there, in her solitude, she gave herself up to prayer. Converse with God was her delight. Sometimes she would gather round her the other shepherds, talking with them about heavenly things, and she would try to instil into them a horror of sin and a love of virtue.

Our Lord was pleased to manifest the holiness of His humble handmaiden by miracles. It sometimes happened that the waters of the Arno, swollen by the rain or by the melting of the snow, were an insurmountable barrier between Jane and her home. She would then spread her cloak upon the river, and kneeling on this new kind of boat reached the opposite bank. At other times when a storm broke over the country and the hail and rain came down in torrents, the humble shepherdess would collect her flock under an oak, and, while everything round was under water, she and her flock were spared, not a drop of rain fell on them. This prodigy was soon perceived by the shepherds of the country, and when they saw that a storm was imminent, says an ancient biographer, they hurried as fast as they could with their flocks to seek shelter with the handmaid of God, and thus were preserved from the inclemency of the weather, to the great surprise of their friends.<sup>2</sup>

When Jane reached the age of twenty-three she was inspired with the thought of separating herself completely

<sup>2</sup> The oak is still to be seen under which Jane and the other shepherds would shelter with their flocks. It is religiously preserved by the people of the country in memory of the miracle worked by the servant of God. The trunk of the oak, now six hundred years old, measures over fourteen feet in circumference, its height about forty feet, and its wide spreading branches make a circumference of over 250 feet.

from the world to embrace the life of a recluse, so as to be able to give herself wholly to meditation on heavenly things. It is very probable that this inspiration was the result of the still recent example of St. Viridiana, who led the life of a recluse, at Castelflorentino, a town at a little distance from Signa. Blessed Jane, therefore, got a poor cell constructed below the town of Signa, a few paces from the right bank of the Arno. Before shutting herself up in it, she went to Carmignano, to the Friars Minor, to receive the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis and to take upon herself the Rule of the great Patriarch.<sup>3</sup>

The handmaid of God lived forty years in this solitude, leading a life more angelic than human and accepting from the charity of the faithful the poor food necessary for her subsistence. Jane was a faithful imitator of St. Viridiana, and declared war against her innocent body by practising the most severe austerities. To mortification she added the most fervent prayer and constant contemplation of the Divine perfections. Thus she became more and more united to her God in hope and charity. Who can recount the ineffable delights with which our Lord flooded the soul of His faithful handmaiden? Who can unfold the wonders which were wrought in the narrow limits of this poor cell? What we do know is that our Lord hides from the proud the mysterious depths of His love, while He takes delight in revealing it to the humble and to little ones.

However great was the happiness of Blessed Jane in her heavenly converse with her Beloved, whatever repugnance she felt for this earth, the charity which burnt in her heart made her pitiful for the miseries of her neighbour. The poor, the sick, the sorrowful, all flocked to her hermitage,

<sup>3</sup> The annalists of the Order, Wadding, Mazzara, Terrinca, the authors of the Martyrology and of the Menologium, assert that Blessed Jane of Signa belonged to the Third Order of St. Francis. The Legend of the Breviary, moreover, says so expressly, which is more than sufficient for us.



and sought from her consolation in their troubles, and relief from their ills. To have a word with her was a healing balm to wounded hearts, her exhortations were always successful in winning souls to God, and the sick often recovered their health through her touch. She restored the sight of a blind person, brought back a child to life, multiplied bread for one who had been a benefactress to her, and worked a great many other miracles.

Her life was spent thus between prayer, penance, and the exercise of charity. It pleased her Divine Spouse at length to invite this wise virgin to the wedding feast of eternity. It was on the ninth of November, 1307, she was then sixty-three years old.<sup>4</sup> Immediately on the death of Blessed Jane, the bells of three neighbouring churches, miraculously set ringing, proclaimed the glory that she was now enjoying in heaven. People hastened to her hermitage, and when a gap had been made in the wall of her cell she was discovered lying on the ground, with a faggot under her head, like a person asleep. Her body was taken to the parish church of St. John Baptist, and there it has rested for nearly six centuries, free from corruption. It is still venerated by the people.<sup>5</sup> Many miracles were wrought at her tomb. When the plague devastated Italy in 1348, she preserved her part of the country from this terrible scourge. The inhabitants of Signa still invoke her in times of drought, and against hail and lightning. On many occasions Blessed Jane has

<sup>4</sup> We give the date indicated by the Legend in the Office, as the only correct one, in proof of which we may quote the inscription on the chest which contained her body from the time of her death until 1629. *Hic jacet corpus B. Joannæ eremitæ de Signa. MCCCVII.*

<sup>5</sup> The body of the Saint rests in a side chapel which is dedicated to her. Her cell is at the bottom of the town, not far from the right bank of the Arno. Owing to a slight land-slip it is now below the street. Over the cell a little chapel has been built in honour of Blessed Jane, this place is called *il Beatino*. It was not therefore at Carmignano, as Wadding says, that Blessed Jane lived as a recluse, but at Signa, as local traditions attest as well as still existing monuments.

made her protection felt. On the seventh of September 1798, Pius VI. sanctioned the devotion paid to her from time immemorial, and gave permission to the diocese of Florence to celebrate her office. (This feast is only kept by the Friars Minor of the Observance.)

Blessed Jane Signa stands forth as a mirror of simplicity and innocence. Indeed, it is these virtues which the Church asks for in the prayer on her feast. "O God, the friend of simple souls, Who didst reveal, in the first place, to shepherds the birth of Thy Divine Son, and Who hast given to us in Blessed Jane fresh examples of simplicity and innocence, vouchsafe, by her intercession, to grant to Thy servants that they may follow in her steps in the ways of simplicity of heart and of innocence."

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#### DECEMBER 12.

#### *Invention of the body of the Seraphic Patriarch St. Francis.*

[1820.]

ON the twenty-fifth of May, in the year 1230, the body of St. Francis was solemnly removed from the church of St. George to the basilica which had just been built in his honour. The precious remains were buried at a great depth, in the middle of a vault cut out of the rock, and the secret of which was known only to a few religious. In the end, the precise spot where the remains of the Holy Patriarch lay was forgotten. At the beginning of this century excavations were made under the High Altar in the lower church, and after working secretly for fifty-two nights, the shrine of the Saint was discovered. The account of this Invention will be found in the Life of St. Francis, Vol. I.

of *The Lives of the Saints and Blessed of the Three Orders of St. Francis*, p. 83. A commemoration thereof is made to-day throughout the Order. This feast was prescribed by a decree of Pope Leo XII., dated the twenty-second of June, 1824.

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*St. Bartolo, Parish Priest.*

[1228-1300.]

*Of the Third Order.*

THIS Saint has been surnamed *the Job of Tuscany*, because of the wonderful patience with which he bore a terrible leprosy during the last twenty years of his life. Bartolo was born at San Gemignano, in Tuscany, of the ancient and illustrious house of the Counts of Mucchio, of whom he was the last descendant.<sup>1</sup> His pious mother, who for twenty years

<sup>1</sup> The life of St. Bartolo was written in the fourteenth century by an Augustinian religious, the author did not know the servant of God, but many persons who had known him were still living at this time, and he was able to consult them. The dean of the collegiate chapel of San Gemignano has founded a communal library which possesses a manuscript copy of this biography, the worthy prelate had the kindness to show it to us, it is entitled *Legenda beati Bartholi confessoris de Sancto Gemignano, scripta a fratre Giunta, Ordini heremitarum Sancti Augustini*. This has been the source whence all the lives of the Saint have since been taken. Father Theodore Ferroni, Augustinian religious, wrote a Life of our Saint which was published at Siena in 1650. Dom Razzi has given an abridgment of the legend of Father Giunta in his *Lives of Tuscan Saints*. We have followed these three biographies in our life of the Saint, but have been unable, owing to want of space, to relate all the miracles given therein. The annalists of the Seraphic Order, especially Wadding, Mazzara, Algezira, the authors of the Martyrology and the Menologium, Terrinca, a Tuscan annalist, also speak of St. Bartolo as a Tertiary of St. Francis. From time immemorial the title of *Saint* has been bestowed on this great servant of God. He is known at St. Gemignano only by the name of *Santo Bartolo*.

of her married life had been childless, was constantly beseeching God through the intercession of the Prince of the Apostles that He would vouchsafe to give her a son. One night, she saw in a dream, St. Peter, who said to her, "Your prayer is granted. You will bring a son into the world who will despise and forsake all earthly goods for God, and will gather up great riches for Heaven." The words of St. Peter were realized, and the countess gave birth to a son who was named Bartolo.

From his very earliest years the child seemed to be prevented by the graces of Heaven. His piety, his modesty, his obedience, his diligence in study, his zeal for everything belonging to the service of God, were the admiration of all. He was, in a word, a pattern for children of his age, and, moreover, they chose him for their leader. Bartolo directed their games so wisely and amiably, he managed so well to inspire them with the fear of God and the love of virtue, that he was called the *Angel of peace*.

Bartolo felt that he was called by God to the priesthood, and he confided his desire to his father. The Count had built great hopes on his son, the only heir of his name and of his fortune, and was extremely angry on hearing of his resolve. Every means were used to deter the young man from his pious practices and to make him take part in worldly things, neither reproaches nor ill-treatment were spared. Bartolo was more than ever determined to serve God in the way to which he felt himself called, he saw nothing for it but to leave his father's house. He went to Pisa, where he was received as a servant in the Abbey of the Benedictines of *San Vito*. There he was employed in serving the sick. This work of mercy has been a noviceship of sanctity for a great number of chosen souls, and by means of it, Bartolo advanced ere long, very far in the paths of holiness. The monks were charmed with his piety and with the rare virtues which adorned his soul, and they proposed that he should take the monastic habit, but our Lord had other designs on His faithful servant.



Bartolo had recourse to prayer that he might learn our Lord's will for for him. One night, during sleep, Jesus Christ appeared to him, His Body was covered with wounds, He held a discipline in His Hand, and addressing Bartolo, He said, "Bartolo, it is not under the monastic habit that you are to win the crown which is prepared for you in eternity, but it is by sufferings and wounds which will afflict your body for twenty years." The servant of God sought the advice of his director as to the best means of accomplishing the will of God. Then he took the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, made a vow of chastity and betook himself with renewed fervour to penitential exercises and to meditation on Divine things. The devil attacked him furiously, appearing before him under horrible shapes, but, by means of prayer, the servant of God came victorious out of all these temptations. Bartolo spent many years in the service of the monastery, leading a purely heavenly life, hidden in God.

The Bishop of Volterra, having been informed of the great virtues of the son of the Count of Mucchio, invited him to return to his diocese that he might receive Holy Orders and then be employed in the care of souls. Our Saint looked upon his Bishop's invitation as the expression of the will of God. From his childhood he had felt a marked attraction for the ecclesiastical state, it seemed to him that the moment had now come to follow the call of God. He was then thirty years of age.

When he had been ordained priest, Bartolo fulfilled for ten years the office of *pro-curato* of the parish of Pichena, in the diocese of Volterra. His biographer tells us of the solicitude of this holy pastor for the spiritual interests of his flock, of the numerous conversions he brought about, of his tender charity towards the poor and the sick. For them he deprived himself of everything, and lived in the most extreme poverty. He delighted in giving hospitality to travellers, to pilgrims, and especially to the Friars Minor.

Once he had received into his house a poor beggar, when about midnight he heard these words, "Bartolo you have been the host of Jesus Christ." He went instantly to the room where his guest was resting and found he had vanished. A young man belonging to San Gemignano, called Vivaldo, became his disciple, he also took the habit of the Third Order, and under the guidance of his holy master attained to a very high degree of holiness.<sup>2</sup>

When he was fifty-two, St. Bartolo was attacked by a horrible leprosy, which was a daily martyrdom to him for twenty years. Then the words of our Lord came back to him which he had heard during his stay in the monastery of St. Vitus, and he accepted this heavy trial as a grace from Heaven. He begged his bishop to relieve him from the care of his parish, and went with his disciple, St. Vivaldo, to a hospital for lepers about a mile from San Gemignano. Bartolo was appointed director of this house, and, if tradition is to be believed, he was able to celebrate Mass notwithstanding his terrible disease. There our Saint lived on the charity of the faithful, and was assisted with the greatest devotedness by his disciple and by a pious servant maid named Stella. The trial was great indeed for the servant of God, his whole body was but one sore, his flesh became putrefied, yet amidst his most fearful sufferings he never ceased to bless and praise God. This infirmity lasted till his death, that is to say for twenty years, and he bore it with the greatest resignation. The

<sup>2</sup> After the death of St. Bartolo, St. Vivaldo led an eremitical life in a forest near Montaione, three leagues from San Gemignano. After his death many miracles were wrought through his intercession and his relics have always been venerated in the parish church of Montaione, and Pope Leo X. and Pope Benedict XIV. granted indulgences in his honour. But though from time immemorial he has been given the title of *Saint*, neither office nor feast are kept in his honour. The Friars of the Observance founded, in 1494, a convent to which they gave the name of St. Vivaldo, it is still in their possession.

wonderful patience of the Saint drew around him a great many persons who came to be edified at the sight thereof, and to seek his advice. Our Lord bestowed on him the gift of miracles. Instead of an offensive smell, his sores diffused a heavenly perfume.

At length God was pleased to call to Himself this faithful servant, that He might crown the merits he had acquired by so many virtues, by his work for souls, and, above all, by his long sufferings. The day of his death was revealed to him. After having received the Last Sacraments, he fell asleep in the Lord, on the twelfth of December, 1300. On the following day, his body was removed to the Augustinian church at San Gemignano, where he had asked to be buried. There was an immense concourse of the faithful and many miracles testified to the glory which he was enjoying in Heaven. Among other miracles, his biographer relates the following. His servant, Stella, was weeping by the coffin over the loss of so good a master, when the Saint stretched out his hand and took hers which he held for five hours, as if he wanted to show her how grateful he was for the services she had rendered him. The tomb of St. Bartolo is still to be seen in this same church of St. Augustine, and the faithful flock there to honour him whom they have surnamed "the Job of Tuscany." In 1498, Alexander VI. approved the veneration paid to this great servant of God. (His feast is kept yearly on the thirteenth of December, in the church of St. Augustine where rest his precious relics.

DECEMBER 17.

*Blessed Margaret Colonna. Virgin.*

[1284.]

*Of the Order of St. Clare.*

MARGARET first saw the light at Rome. Her father was Count Odo, Lord of Palestrina and of the ancient and noble house of Colonna.<sup>1</sup> She lost both her parents when quite young and became the ward of her two brothers, the youngest of whom was afterwards raised to the purple. Her eldest brother, with whom she lived, proposed to marry her to the chief magistrate of the city of Rome. Everything prospered according to his wishes, and the consent of Margaret alone was wanting, but she steadily declared that her only Spouse should be Jesus Christ. This resolution made her family very angry and brought threats and ill-treatment upon her. While this severe trial lasted, her younger brother, James, continually helped her with his advice and encouraged her to persevere in her resolution. Our Lady deigned to appear to her and filled her with unspeakable consolation. This sweet vision completed her distaste for the world to such a point that she could no

<sup>1</sup> Mark of Lisbon, Rudolphus, Wadding, Mazzara, the authors of the Menologium and the Martyrology have all given us a life of Blessed Margaret. There is also a very complete biography of this servant of God in the manuscript chronicles of the Order of St. Clare, by Father Mariano of Florence, P. II., chap. xvii. We have taken this last annalist as our authority.



longer bear to have anything to do with it nor to hear it alluded to. The earth is nothing to those who have tasted of the delights of Heaven!

The humble maiden wishing to make herself even more worthy of the Divine Bridegroom, gave herself up to the daily practice of silence, prayer, and the most rigorous penance. Our Lord inspired her with the idea of separating herself wholly from the world by retiring to the top of a hill which rises above the town of Palestrina. Two of her servant maids accompanied her with the intention of following in her footsteps. In this retreat the spouses of Jesus Christ spent their time in the contemplation of heavenly things and in a life made up of privations and penance. They wore a poor habit like that of the Poor Clares, and they followed as far as they could the observances of the great St. Clare of Assisi.

Margaret's relations were very angry at her flight, and one of her uncles proposed to go and drag her by violence from her retreat. But the following night he was deterred by a terrible vision from executing his project and he became, instead, the greatest upholder of the servant of God. Ere long, the faithful maid was compensated by Heaven for her generous sacrifices. St. Francis appeared to her holding a red cross, and this cross became imbedded in her chest, as if trying to penetrate into her heart. One day, while she was praying, her Divine Spouse placed a crown of lilies on her head. Another day, He put a gold ring on her finger in token of her heavenly nuptials. When giving food to the poor on the feast of St. John Baptist, she recognized among them, our Lord Himself accompanied by His glorious Precursor.

Her charity for her neighbour knew no bounds but the love of God. Margaret was the providence of the poor and unfortunate. Hearing once that a community of Friars Minor were attacked by an infectious illness, she sacrificed her own repose, went about begging alms, carried help and remedies to the poor friars and gave them every assistance

which charity could suggest in their forsaken condition. But it was not enough for the faithful handmaid of Jesus Christ to imitate in some degree the manner of life of the daughters of St. Clare, she wished to enter a monastery of the Order, to bid good-bye for ever to the world, and to spend the rest of her days in the hidden solitude of the cloister. She got leave from Father Bonagratia, General of the Friars Minor, to be received, together with her companions, into the monastery of the Poor Clares at Assisi, but a serious illness prevented her from carrying out this project. Our Lord had other designs for her.

As soon as she was restored to health, Margaret went to Rome, to visit the Tomb of the Apostles, with her brother James Colonna, then a Cardinal of Holy Church. For some time she stayed with a faithful spouse of Jesus Christ, named Aldrude, who kept the Rule of St. Clare in the privacy of her own home, after which she returned, together with her companions, to her dear mountain of Palestrina, with the intention of founding a monastery of the Order of St. Clare. Cardinal James Colonna informed the Sovereign Pontiff of the wish of his sister, and begged permission to erect canonically the community under the Rule of St. Clare. The Pope acceded to this request and wished that the Rule of the Urbanist Clares should be followed in the new house. "By command of the Pope," says Father Mariano of Florence, "Cardinal Colonna gave to these nuns the Rule of St. Clare which Alexander IV., at the request of the King of France, modified for the sisters of the monastery of Longchamps, which Rule Pope Urban IV. again modified and approved.<sup>2</sup> The pious Cardinal settled near the new community, and devoted himself to the guidance of these fervent souls in the paths of perfection.

<sup>2</sup> *Manuscript chronicles of the Order of St. Clare*, by Father Mariano of Florence, P. II., chap. xvii. It follows from these words of the annalist that Blessed Margaret Colonna was an Urbanist Clare, on the other hand, we know that the community of St. Sylvester *in capite* has always followed the Rule of Urban IV.

The handmaid of the Lord was at the height of her wishes now that she had become a child of St. Clare, and her one desire was to advance with renewed fervour in self-abnegation and sacrifice. Fresh favours from Heaven were to reward her generous love. Her Divine Spouse appeared to her as a most bounteous King, but crucified for our sins. Margaret, who had long craved for the happiness of experiencing in her own body the sufferings of her Saviour, knelt and adored Him, then, as Magdalene did of old, she took hold lovingly of the Feet of her Divine Master, and like Thomas she put her fingers into His open Wounds. The desire of her soul was to be satisfied, the pains of Jesus were to pass on to His Spouse. A fearful ulcer attacked her right side and eat into the flesh, she experienced indescribable pains all over her body, but through all she blessed the Lord Who had deigned to visit her in His mercy. "Beg God, my children," she said to her companions, "not to lighten my sufferings, but rather to cut, to hew, to burn here below, so that I may not be confounded for ever."

For seven long years this generous and heroic victim of holy love remained on the altar of sacrifice, presenting a sight worthy of the angels to her daughters, and sighing for the coming of her Heavenly Bridegroom. When her last hour came, she was assisted by her brother, Cardinal Colonna, and her soul was greatly consoled by the sweetest visions of Jesus and His Holy Mother.

At last, on the thirtieth of September, 1284, this wise virgin was summoned to the joys of Paradise. After her death the community of Palestrina moved into Rome, to the monastery of St. Sylvester *in capite*. The nuns brought with them the precious remains of Blessed Margaret, and placed them in their church. At the time of the last suppression of monasteries at Rome, this convent of Clares was transformed into a Post Office, and the body of Blessed Margaret Colonna was removed, at the same time with the nuns, to the monastery of St. Cecilia in *Trastevere*.

DECEMBER 19.

*Blessed Conrad of Offida. Priest.*

[1241—1306.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor.*

THIS blessed man came into the world at Offida, a small town in the diocese of Ascoli, in the March of Ancona.<sup>1</sup> Trained by Christian parents, his childhood was spent in innocence and in a seriousness which does not belong to that age. When barely fourteen he entered the Order of St. Francis, went through the trials of the noviceship with fervour, and was then sent to the convent at Ascoli to learn the sacred sciences. He made rapid progress in his studies in a short time, but an interior voice called him to the more lowly offices of religious life. With the consent of his superiors, he put his studies aside and for several years was employed either in the kitchen or on the quest. His time was divided between work and contemplation. The servant of God lived for ten years at the convent of Forano with his holy friend, Blessed Peter of Treja. This lowly abode witnessed the many heavenly favours bestowed on these two great servants of God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The annalists of the Order, and in particular Bartholomew of Pisa, Gonzaga, Rudolphus, Wadding, the Martyrology and the Menologium, speak of Blessed Conrad of Offida. *The Chronicle of the twenty-four Generals* likewise relates the edifying life of this great servant of God.

<sup>2</sup> The little convent of Forano, founded by St. Francis, is in the diocese of Osimo, and is situated amidst the chain of Appenines which skirt the Adriatic.



Blessed Conrad often received visits from his Angel Guardian. This celestial spirit had formerly filled the same office towards St. Francis that he now held with regard to Blessed Conrad. He loved to converse with Conrad about the virtues of the Seraphic Patriarch and to inspire him with the desire of following in his footsteps. Conrad followed the counsels of his good Angel so faithfully that, according to the opinion of those companions of St. Francis who were still living, he was a perfect copy of the Seraphic Father. He had such a love for poverty that during the fifty years of his religious life, he always wore the same habit and went barefoot without ever using sandals. To the practice of holy poverty he added unintermitting prayer, austere penance, and above all a scrupulous fidelity to the Rule and to all the observances of religious life. In reward for his zeal, he was often honoured with the heavenly converse of our Blessed Lady, the holy Angels, St. Francis, Blessed Giles of Assisi and of many other Saints.

On one feast of the Purification, as Blessed Conrad was praying in a wood adjoining the convent of Forano, our Lady appeared to him surrounded with light, holding the Infant Jesus in her arms. She gave Him to Conrad, who, transported with holy joy, pressed Him to his heart. Another day as he was praying in the same wood, he saw a wolf running towards him, pursued and closed upon by huntsmen. He had often heard of the harm done by this wolf, but he took it under his protection and, remembering what St. Francis did with the wolf at Gubbio, he changed the ferocious beast into a gentle lamb and took it back with him to the convent.

Blessed Conrad lived for some time on the mount of Alvernia, the most venerated abode of the Order after St. Mary of the Angels. The friars who dwelt there were chosen from among the most saintly of the religious. It was in virtue of his sanctity that the General of the Order, Jerome of Ascoli, who was afterwards Pope Nicholas IV.,

sent the blessed man to live in this holy abode. His days were spent in prayer, penance, and fervent contemplation. Though Conrad had set aside his theological studies to give himself up to a lowly and hidden life, his superiors raised him later on to the priesthood. He was employed in preaching the Word of God, and his ministry was most fruitful. The impassioned eloquence of his discourses went home to the hearts of his hearers and opened them to the influence of Divine Love.

In 1294, Blessed Conrad seeing that the vigour of the Rule was becoming insensibly enfeebled in the Order, applied, together with several of his brothers, to Pope Celestine V., for leave to separate from the body of the Order, and to live according to all the strictness of the Rule of St. Francis. Boniface VIII., a little later on, suppressed this new congregation of *Celestine Hermits*, and then Conrad, who was a true son of obedience, immediately returned under the authority of the Superiors of the Order.

After about fifty years of religious life, the servant of God was called to receive the reward due to his merits. He died at Bastia, near Assisi, during the course of a mission which he was giving in this place. It was on the twelfth of December, 1306, he was then sixty-five years of age. In 1320, his body was removed from Bastia to the church of the Friars Minor at Perugia. Pius VII. ratified, in 1817, the veneration paid from time immemorial to this servant of God. (His feast is kept on this day by the Observance and by the Conventuals.)

In a letter to one of his friends, Blessed Conrad said, "The man who wishes to arrive at perfection must first divest himself interiorly of all affection to any creature, and make up his mind to possess nothing beyond Jesus Christ . . . He ought in the second place to long after contempt, humiliation, and shame from creatures. . . He ought to desire to be in desolation, to be overwhelmed with sorrows, to be steeped in pain and suffering of the body, and above

all, in bitterness of heart, for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His most sweet Mother. . . ." This was, in truth, the path faithfully trodden by Blessed Conrad during his lifetime, by means of which He was raised to a very high degree of perfection, and merited to have many singular favours bestowed on him.

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DECEMBER 22.

*Blessed Ugolino Magalotti, Hermit.*

[1373.]

*Of the Third Order:*

THIS blessed man was born in the neighbourhood of Camerino, in the early part of the fourteenth century. He belonged to the noble family of the Magalotti.<sup>1</sup> Our Lord vouchsafed to prevent him with His heavenly benedictions from his earliest years. Ugolino was left an orphan in the flower of his youth, and then he decided to bind himself to the service of his crucified Saviour, after the example of St. Francis. He sold all his goods, distributed the price among the poor, and, having been clothed in the habit of the Third Order, he withdrew to a solitary spot, there to live as a hermit.

The life of Blessed Ugolino was spent in the practice of contemplation and the most austere penance. The devil waged a long and cruel war against him, out of which he

<sup>1</sup> The few known details of the life of this blessed man are furnished by the Process of beatification, and by an old manuscript life. Several writers have mentioned Blessed Ugolino Magalotti, namely, Lillii, *Storie di Camerino*, ii. p. 106, Turchi, *Camerinum sacrum*, Bombacci, *Arbore della famiglia Magalotti*, Jacobille, *Vite de' Santi e Beati dell' Umbria*, II. dec., Calcagni, *Indice de' Santi della Religione francescana*.

came victorious by the help of prayer and the protection of Mary Immaculate. The fame of his sanctity soon spread through the country round, and the faithful came in crowds to his hermitage, to beg the help of his prayers, to receive his advice, to obtain relief from their complaints. Our Lord glorified His servant by the gift of miracles, and an immense number of sick persons were restored to health through the prayers of the holy hermit.

Blessed Ugolino slept in the Lord on the eleventh of December, 1373. His body was taken, accompanied by a large concourse of the people, to the parish church of Fiegni, in the diocese of Camerino. The devotion, from time out of mind, to this eminent servant of God, was sanctioned by Pius IX., on December the fourth, 1856. Leo XIII. has given leave that a Mass should be celebrated and an office recited in his honour. (His feast is kept by the Observance.)

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#### DECEMBER 23.

*Blessed Nicholas Factor, Priest.*

[1520—1583.]

*Of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance.*

BLESSED NICHOLAS FACTOR was one of the greatest of the servants of God during the sixteenth century in Spain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This blessed man bore the name of Peter, because he was born on the feast of this Apostle, and that of Nicholas because his father had a special devotion to St. Nicholas of Bari. He himself signed his name as Peter Nicholas Factor. Nevertheless he is always mentioned by the name alone of Nicholas. Two short biographies of Blessed Nicholas Factor were published in Rome, one in 1668, the other in 1786. In 1787, Father Joachim Company, who was afterwards Minister General of the Order, published at Valencia a very remarkable life of the servant of



He was born at Valencia, on the twenty-ninth of June, 1520, and received baptism in the same font as St. Vincent Ferrer, to whom he afterwards became specially devout. His father, Vincent Factor, was a native of Sicily, and came to settle at Valencia, where he married Ursula Stagna, who shared his deep and sincere piety. The worthy couple pursued the modest calling of tailors, and were comfortably well off. Their first care was the education of their young family, and they took the greatest pains to develop the germs of virtue which were soon apparent in the soul of their child Nicholas.

The boy was barely four years old when he began to fast rigorously three times a week. His parents found it difficult to persuade him to take a little food in the evening. As soon as he was old enough he was sent to school, where he was the admiration of his masters and school-fellows because of his modesty, obedience, piety, and success in his studies. He did not care for childish games, when he left school he went straight home to his parents, and spent his leisure in prayer and study. His recreation was to make little altars and to deck them with pictures of Jesus and Mary. His parents held him up as a pattern to his brothers and sisters, indeed all those who knew him already revered him as a Saint.

As he grew older, a tender love for the poor took possession of the heart of Nicholas. He deprived himself daily of a part of his food that he might relieve them. One day

God. In this same year, 1787, Father Louis Mary of Vicenza wrote an abridgment of the Life, *Saggio storico delle azioni maravigliose del B. Nicolo Fattor di, Valenza, della Regolare Osservanza di San Francesco, composto dal P. Lettor, Luigi Maria di Vicenza, dell' Osservanza medesima Riformata. In Vicenza, 1787.* Gonzaga, Mazzara, and several other writers belonging to the Order have spoken of Blessed Nicholas Factor. The continuators of Wadding's *Annals* have given his life, taken from the acts of the Process of Beatification and from biographies which had been published. These are also the sources from which we have taken the biography given here.

when he had given away his breakfast to a poor woman a companion said to him, "You have nothing left for yourself?" "You may be sure," replied Nicholas, "that the breakfast which I have given away to the poor woman will profit me much more than if I had eaten it myself." He frequently visited the hospitals, waited on the sick, dressed their sores, consoled them, and procured all the help for them that he could. The lepers were his special favourites. He would kiss their feet, their hands, their poor rags, for the sake of Him Who became poor and was covered with wounds for our sins. Thus the servant of God began to display the admirable charity which was to fill his whole life.

By the time he was fifteen, Nicholas had made amazing progress in his studies. He spoke Latin as fluently as his native tongue. His father was delighted with the exceptional talents displayed by his son, and proposed that he should enter business, promising him a comparatively large sum to start with. The young man, however, cared only to lay up treasure for Heaven, and begged his father to put by the money for his sisters, because he himself had resolved to embrace a religious life. Nicholas often went to see the Friars Minor of the Observance at the convent of St. Mary of Jesus, in the neighbourhood of Valencia. On the thirtieth of November, 1537, at the age of seventeen, led by the Spirit of God, he left his father's house by stealth, joined this fervent community, and was clothed in the Seraphic habit. On hearing the news, his father was in the deepest grief, he hastened to the convent and implored his son to have pity on his sorrow, and on that of his mother and all the family. The novice answered with much modesty, wisdom and firmness, he comforted his father, appealed to his faith, and made him see that instead of being grieved, he ought to bless and thank our Lord for having chosen one of his children for His service. Touched by his son's words, the father gave his full consent and returned home consoled.

From the very beginning of his religious life, Blessed

Nicholas trod in the footsteps of his Seraphic Father with wonderful fervour, and became a finished pattern of a true Friar Minor. After his profession he was made to study, then ordained priest at Valencia. Immediately after his ordination his superior employed him in the apostolic ministry. Later on he held the office of Guardian in different convents and that of Definitor of his Province, he also filled the post of confessor to the Poor Clares of the royal monastery in Madrid and to the Urbanist Clares of Valencia. He often stayed in the communities of recollection which the Fathers of the Observance of Valencia had established in their Province, as the Constitutions require, and he was even employed to found new ones. In these different employments the servant of God produced immense good in souls by his godly wisdom, by his eminent sanctity and by his truly stupendous miracles. Blessed Nicholas Factor preached to the people with such a burning desire for the salvation of souls and with so pure a zeal for the glory of God, that his fervid words enlightened the minds and touched the hearts of the most hardened. He would often fall into an ecstasy in the midst of his sermon, and his raptures lasted so long that his hearers were forced to retire. Great sinners were struck with admiration, beat their breasts and did penance. Sometimes when in the pulpit he was surrounded with a heavenly light, and at other times St. Francis, or the Blessed Virgin with a multitude of angels were seen to appear to him. But his life of prayer and incredible austerities were the most powerful aids to his apostolate. Before going up into the pulpit, he habitually took three disciplines. One for his own sins, one for those of his neighbour, and a third that our Lord might vouchsafe to make his preaching fruitful.

The servant of God begged many times for leave to go and preach the Gospel to the heathen, in the hope of winning martyrdom. This grace being refused to him, he worked unintermittingly at the conversion of the Moors in

Spain. Twice he offered these pagans to throw himself into a furnace, if they would promise to receive baptism, if he came out of it safe and sound. But his offer was not accepted.

Like the Good Shepherd, he went in search of poor sinners. One day, as the blessed man was crossing the bridge at Valencia, he met a gentleman, and taking him aside, snatched from him a cord which he had hidden under his clothes. The poor wretch, falling on his knees, owned that he had intended to commit suicide. After having made a good confession, he went away converted and fortified against despair. A woman in the same town, unable to bear any longer her husband's ill-treatment, had twice tried to hang herself, and she was on the point of throwing herself into a well with a stone round her neck, when Blessed Nicholas came to the house and asked to speak with her. He conversed a long while with her as to the patience needful in her position and exhorted her to be full of courage in bearing her troubles. The poor woman burst into tears, confessed her sinful intention, and added that at the moment she was about to put the stone round her neck the devil said to her, "Make haste, for God has revealed to Father Nicholas what you mean to do, and he is hastening here to prevent it." She afterwards put herself under the guidance of the Saint and led a most fervent life. The biographers of Blessed Nicholas Factor relate many similar facts which reveal his zeal for the salvation of poor sinners, and the gift which he possessed of reading the secret thoughts of the heart.

On many occasions he revealed to certain persons the state of their conscience, and to others their most secret thoughts. A Dominican monk, wishing to cut off a piece of his habit, put a pair of scissors into his sleeve, but just as he approached the blessed man intending to accomplish his pious theft, Nicholas said to him, "Father, give up your design and put away your scissors, for I will not lend myself to your whims."



In 1571, being at the convent at Valencia, he spent the night in praying and taking the discipline with one of his brothers, Father Michael Laurence. Then he informed him that, through the prayers of the saintly Pontiff, Pius V., the Christian army had just won a brilliant victory against the Crescent. A few days after, the news thereof was brought to Spain, and the words of the blessed man were confirmed on every point. He foretold the election of Sixtus V., as Sovereign Pontiff, three years before the event. A great many other prophecies by him are related, which came to pass most exactly. The servant of God, whose heart was full of tender compassion for the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, wrought a great number of miracles during his lifetime for the relief of all kinds of misfortunes. A lawyer belonging to Valencia, who happened to be at Salamanca on business, fell dangerously ill, he would have given anything to be visited and assisted by Father Nicholas, who was then at Valencia, but being unable to warn him in time, owing to the distance, he begged his Angel Guardian to make known his state to the good Father. A few minutes after, the blessed man came into his room, took a chair, and consoled his friend. Then he made the sign of the cross over him and disappeared. Soon after, the sick man recovered his health.

Blessed Nicholas Factor was thought a great deal of by the great personages of his time, by the kings and princes of Spain, by bishops and persons of the highest rank. He was most intimate with St. Paschal Baylon, who was summoned to give evidence in the Process of his Beatification, together with St. Louis Bertrand and the Venerable John of Ribera, Archbishop of Valencia. As to himself, he thought that he was the greatest of sinners, and was never so happy as when others shared the feeling of scorn that he had for his own person. Writers of his life relate acts of humility so amazing as to be beyond belief, were it not that the facts are included in the Process framed for the Cause of his Beatification.

His austerities were incredible. He took the discipline to blood, and the violence of his self-inflicted blows were such that his flesh was torn in shreds while the blood streamed from him. While he was Guardian, his religious, moved with pity at hearing him scourging himself so unmercifully, came knocking at the door of his cell, pretending that they wanted to speak to him, and by means of this pious fraud they constrained him to interrupt his penance. There was no kind of maceration that he did not inflict on his innocent flesh, and, indeed, it was only by a miracle that his frail body did not sink under the weight of such austerities. Thus our Divine Saviour continued in this hero of penance the impenetrable mysteries of His Passion and Cross.

Like a true follower of St. Francis, Nicholas had a very special love for holy poverty. His habit was all patched, and his breviary and bible were the only things which he kept for his own use. In composing his sermons he used only the books which were absolutely necessary, and even then he kept them the shortest time possible. If seculars sent him some article, or a supply of something for his own use, he put it all at the disposal of the community.

God was pleased to reward the generosity of His servant by the most wonderful favours from Heaven. According to the testimony of St. Louis Bertrand, his life was more in Heaven than on earth. His raptures and ecstasies were so frequent that it might almost be said that they were continual. They came upon him during Holy Mass, in the choir, the pulpit, the cloister, the refectory, sometimes even in the street. These raptures lasted many hours, and sometimes many days. Then he was to be heard praying for the Church, for the conversion of sinners, for the propagation of the Faith. It sufficed for him to speak of, or to hear spoken of, the things of God to make him fall into an ecstasy, and, sometimes, to be raised from the ground. For this reason he used to ask his companion not to talk to him about these things in the street, for fear that a rapture should come upon him.

Nicholas never went up to the altar without first reciting the penitential psalms and taking a discipline to blood. During the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice he was quite absorbed in God. Our Lord often appeared to him in the holy Host, under the form of a little child. Many times he fell into an ecstasy while giving Communion to the faithful, and another priest was then obliged to take the ciborium to finish giving Holy Communion.

One day when he was praying, at Taragona, before a statue of our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God desired him to go and say Holy Mass. He obeyed instantly, and as he vested St. Francis was seen by his side handing to him the girdle, and St. Dominic giving him the chasuble. On another occasion, it was the Angels who helped him to vest for Mass.

The writers of his life give detailed accounts of the wonderful apparitions and heavenly converse with which he was favoured. They tell us that he was often visited by our Lord, by our Lady, who laid the Holy Infant in his arms, by St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Vincent Ferrer. Who can say what mysterious workings of Divine love took place in this most seraphic soul? The love of God, with which his heart was all on fire, became so vehement at times, that, unable to bear its supernatural heat, he was forced to plunge into cold water, even in the depth of winter, to moderate the fire which consumed him, and, wonderful to relate, the almost frozen water became heated to boiling-pitch, by coming in contact with the burning breast of the blessed man. Trustworthy witnesses have vouched for this fact on oath in the Process of his Beatification.

Along with the many extraordinary graces with which he was favoured, Blessed Nicholas Factor had to undergo terrible struggles with the spirit of darkness. The devil appeared to him under the shape of a lion, a bear, a serpent, a viper, and of other wild beasts. These monsters threw them-

selves upon him with such fury that he was sometimes left half dead or dying. The servant of God had recourse to prayer with humble and childlike trust, and came out victorious from these conflicts with hell. His victories over the devil gave him a thorough knowledge of his cunning, and this experience in spiritual warfare was of great use to him in the direction of souls in the tribunal of penance. "What doth he know," says Holy Scripture, "that hath not been tried?"<sup>2</sup>

We have only been able to give a slight sketch of the life of Blessed Nicholas Factor, one of the most wonderful of the servants of God among the eminent Saints who made their appearance in Spain in the course of the sixteenth century. There remains one particular fact to relate which happened in the latter years of his life. According to his biographers, Blessed Nicholas, without forsaking the Family of the Observance, separated himself from his Province, in 1581, to go over to the Reformed Friars of the Observance. In 1583, he joined the Capuchins, then recently established in Spain, but after a stay of four or five months in their convent at Barcelona, he left it to return to the Observance of the Province of Valencia, to which he belonged by his profession, in which he had spent his whole life, and in which he desired to die. These facts, on which we are about to dwell, are related in the Process for his Beatification.

As we have already remarked, Blessed Nicholas Factor often lived in the convents of Recollection in his Province of Valencia. In 1581, he made one of the family in one of the communities of the most austere observance.<sup>3</sup> Now at

<sup>2</sup> Eccles. xxxiv. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Though Blessed Nicholas lived at times in convents of Recollection, in the Province of the Observance of Valencia, he did not belong to the Branch of the Recollects, but to that of the Friars of the Observance. It is important to recall once again the declaration made in 1694, by the General Chapter of Victoria. "It is necessary to remark," say the Fathers in Chapter, "that by *Recollect* the General Chapter intends to



this same epoch, the Venerable Angelo del Paz, a native of Perpignan, was living in the Province of the Friars of the Observance in Catalonia. This great servant of God obtained, in 1581, a Bull which was to unite together all the convents of Recollection, belonging to the Friars of the Observance of the Province of Catalonia, of Valencia and Aragon, and to form a Province of Recollects, or rather of Reformed Friars.<sup>4</sup> By this act, Blessed Nicholas belonged to the new Province, and, in consequence, to the branch of the Reformed Friars of the Observance. It was, however, for a very short time, for the new Province was soon afterwards suppressed, and the communities of which it was composed returned to their respective Provinces, and were restored to the same state in which they had been before. Beyond this attempt, there were never either Provinces of Recollects or Reformed Friars in Spain. The great Family of the Observance was only represented by the Friars of the Observance and the Discalced Friars.

After the Province of the Reformed Friars was suppressed, therefore, Blessed Nicholas was restored to his Province of Valencia. But about the beginning of the year 1583, he obtained leave from his superior to leave his convent of the Observance of Valencia to enter a convent of Capuchins which had been just founded at Barcelona. He was inspired to take this step, it is said, in the Process of his Beatification,

designate a religious of a Province of Recollects, and not a religious of a Province of Friars of the Observance who makes one of the family in a convent of Recollection, for all the convents of Recollection established in the Provinces of the Observance, and the religious who inhabit these convents, belong to the particular Branch of the Friars of the Observance." Certain writers, not taking this explanation into account, give the name of Recollect to all the Friars of the Observance in the Provinces of Spain who lived in convents of Recollection. This makes a strange confusion and is against historical truth.

<sup>4</sup> The briefs published in favour of Angelo del Paz, habitually give his religious the name of Reformed Friars, and once or twice only that of Recollects.

in the hope of finding greater austerity among these religious, and also with the desire of being despised, and of being reputed fickle and changeable. On hearing later on that he had been blamed and accused of fickleness, he exclaimed, "God be praised, for I have got what I wished."<sup>5</sup> On his arrival at the Capuchin Convent at Barcelona, a great crowd came to hear the man of God and to behold his ecstasies. After staying five months in this community he found that there was neither greater austerity nor perfection among them than among the Friars of the Observance, and he saw that it would be more profitable for him to return to his Province. He therefore put off the Capuchin habit on June thirteenth, 1583, returned to his convent at Valencia, and ended his days in the lowly abode where he had begun his religious life.

After his return from Valencia, Father John of Madrid consulted him by letter, as to whether it would conduce to his perfection to leave the Discalced Friars of the Observance to join the Capuchins. Blessed Nicholas replied, "I have read your letter attentively, and my answer is that I have left the Capuchins to return to the Observance. I can only tell you that you ought to weigh it well, for where you are you have all that you can want. Pray for this hateful Brother, Nicholas Factor."<sup>6</sup> Having heard that a certain Brother Luke proposed to leave the Discalced Friars of the Observance for the Capuchins, the blessed man said to him, "Tell me why you want to go to the Capuchins, when you are in so holy and so perfect a Province, a Province which I love so much, and which I have defended against those who thought of suppressing it? Beware that if you depart, *you will not find greater perfection elsewhere than in your Province*, so that you will return."<sup>7</sup> The Saint's words came to pass, for, after joining the Capuchins, this religious shortly returned to his Province.

<sup>5</sup> *Ex processu additionali*, n. 20, p. 24. *Annales Minorum*, vol. xx., p. 261; vol. xxi., p. 401.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

A friend of Father Nicholas, who had hitherto felt great reverence for him, was unfavourably impressed on seeing him leave the Capuchins, and would not go to see him on his return. One day, however, he determined to go and pay him a visit. "Being come," he says, "to the convent to pay my respects to Father Nicholas, as soon as he heard that I was there, he said to me with much kindness, 'Why did you not come to see me? is it because I have come back to the habit of the Observance?' I was ashamed, kissed his hand, and acknowledged that I had been wrong. Then he embraced me and again said, 'Why did you not come to see me, do you not know that this habit which I wear is the more perfect?' I did not know what to answer, and I went away full of wonder in that he had fathomed my most secret thoughts."<sup>8</sup>

When his last hour came, and before he had received Holy Viaticum, Blessed Nicholas addressed these remarkable words to his brothers, "I acknowledge that I did wrong in leaving the Observance for some time to join the Congregation of the Capuchins, it was not so much for my advantage, though I acted with good intentions, as God is my witness. Wherefore, my dearest fathers and brothers, I exhort you to be content in the state in which you find yourselves. For as for the Friars Minor of the Observance, if they follow the way of life which is established among them, *nothing will be found lacking of what they could desire as to purity of Rule, and perfection of their state.*"<sup>9</sup>

If the servant of God did not find among the Capuchins of Barcelona the amount of austerity and perfection which he had come to seek, nevertheless these religious kept with perfect faithfulness the spirit of the Rule of the Seraphic Patriarch. When some one asked him if anything had displeased him in the Capuchins, Blessed Nicholas answered, "Not at all, for the religion of our Father St. Francis is

<sup>8</sup> *Annales Minorum*, vol. xx., p. 262.

<sup>9</sup> *Annales Minorum*, vol. xx., p. 262; vol. xxi., p. 401. Gonzaga, p. 1088.

wholly and truly holy in all its members. The Capuchin Fathers are holy, the Fathers of the Observance are holy, and holy also are the Conventuals."<sup>10</sup> The Carthusians of *la Scala*, having asked him why he had left the Capuchins, Father Nicholas replied, "I left men who are entirely holy, to go to men who are also entirely holy."<sup>11</sup>

In the month of June of the year 1583, the servant of God parted from the Capuchins of Barcelona to go to Valencia, to his brothers, the Friars of the Observance of the convent of St. Mary of Jesus. In the course of his journey, he received hospitality from a benefactor of the Order, and said to him, "I am returning to my mother to die." His host was surprised and asked him if his mother was still living. "I am speaking," said Father Nicholas, "of the Observance, which is my mother. I am now going back to her, and when I arrive at Valencia, I shall die there." Seeing that his words were not believed, he persisted, adding that he was returning most joyfully to Valencia, and that he should end his course there.<sup>12</sup> As he entered the convent of St. Mary of Jesus, he exclaimed, "This is my rest for ever and ever, here will I dwell for I have chosen it." He then made a visit to to an image of our Lady which was venerated in an inner chapel, saying to her, "O my Queen! thou wilt not look upon him as a fugitive who returns home, nevermore to leave it."<sup>13</sup> His brothers, who had despaired of ever seeing him again, received him with unbounded delight.

Before very long the illness which was to bring him to the grave declared itself. Out of humility, he asked to be buried in a stable, and, after having received the Last Sacraments, his Blessed soul took its flight to its eternal home. It was on the twenty-third of December, of the year 1583. The blessed man was then sixty-three, and had spent forty-six years in religious life. After his death countless miracles

<sup>10</sup> *Annales Minorum*, vol. xx., p. 262; vol. xxi., p. 401.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*. <sup>12</sup> *Annales Minorum*, vol. xx., p. 263; vol. xxi., p. 400.

<sup>13</sup> *Annales Minorum*, vol. xxi., p. 401.



were wrought at his tomb. Pius VI. published the solemn decree of his beatification on the eighteenth of August, 1786. (His feast is only kept by the Friars Minor of the Observance.)

“O my Jesus,” exclaimed Blessed Nicholas Factor, “O my Life and my Glory, Spouse of my soul, who would not consent to forget himself, and to lose himself, that he might find Thee? Who would not forsake all the perishable and passing things of this world, to lose himself in Thee . . . ? Thou art the place of my rest, the haven of salvation, my Love, my Father, my Physician, my Pastor and my Guide.” Beneath a heart which he drew with his blood, he wrote these words, “Blessed Virgin Mary, I give thee my heart and my soul, protect me against my enemies, now and at the hour of my death.”



HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
THE ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS.





## PART I.

### *The Foundation of the Three Orders of St. Francis.*

FRANCIS OF ASSISI had but a small number of disciples when God was pleased to raise the veil that hides the future, and to shew him the destiny in store for his spiritual family. "Take courage and rejoice in the Lord," said the holy Patriarch to his children, "be not alarmed at the smallness of your number, nor at my simplicity nor your own, for God has revealed to me, that, by His blessing, He will spread this family, of which He is the Father, over the whole world. I would gladly be silent about that which I have seen, but the love I bear you forces me to speak. I saw a great multitude coming to us to take the same habit, and lead the same life. I saw the roads filled with men coming in this direction with great speed. The French and Spanish hasten, the English and Germans follow closely. All nations are moved and the sound of the footsteps of those who come and go, fulfilling the precepts of holy obedience, resounds yet in my ears."<sup>1</sup>

The holy Patriarch lived to see fulfilled the word spoken to him by our Lord. He saw his children increase most wonderfully and penetrate into every country in the world. At the second General Chapter, held in 1219, five

<sup>1</sup> Thomas of Celano, I. *Legend*, P. I., chap. xi.

thousand religious assembled at St. Mary of the Angels, to see and hear their beloved Father. The Order of Friars Minor possessed at that time twelve Provinces, six in Italy, two in France, and the others in Greece, Spain, England and Germany.

During the years that followed the death of St. Francis the Order continued to spread, and reckoned among its members a great number of men remarkable for learning, and holiness.<sup>2</sup> Half a century after the foundation of the Order at the General Chapter held at Narbonne by St. Bonaventure, in 1260, the Friars Minor had already founded about fourteen hundred convents forming thirty-four great Provinces and more than two hundred and thirty Custodies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, a contemporary historian, tells us: "Tempore illo quo intravi in Ordine Fratrum Minorum (1236), inveni viros multos magnæ sanctitatis, et devotionis, et orationis et contemplationis et magnæ litteraturæ." Bernard of Besse, St. Bonaventure's secretary, says in his Chronicle that the first disciples of St. Francis were famous for their holiness and miracles, and he adds: "Longum esset prosequi de confessoribus singulis et martyribus gloriosis, qui tam sub Saracenis, quam hereticorum fautoribus, dum super eorum probitate de Sedis apostolicæ mandato inquirerent, pro fide Christi et Ecclesiæ defensione sunt passi."

<sup>3</sup> St. Francis created twelve Provinces in his lifetime. As the Order increased very much after his death, Brother Elias, as a contemporary historian tells us, divided it into seventy-two Provinces in honour of the seventy-two disciples. (Father Thomas Eccleston, *De adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, p. 32.) But in 1239, at the General Chapter presided over by Gregory IX., when Blessed Albert of Pisa succeeded Brother Elias, the Provinces were reduced to thirty-two, and owing to their greater extent, they were divided into Custodies (*Idem*, p. 33). At the General Chapter of Narbonne the boundaries of the existing Provinces were revised, and two new ones and four Vicariates were formed. The Order of Friars Minor is governed by the Minister General, assisted by a certain number of Counsellors General, and a Procurator General who attends to the business of the Order at the Roman Curia. The Minister General and his Counsellors are chosen by the General Chapter of Provincials; formerly each Province sent several delegates to it. The

The Seraphic Patriarch said one day to his first disciples, "Consider, brethren, what is our vocation. It is not only for our own salvation that God has called us by His Mercy, it is also for the salvation of the whole world; it is in order, that we may by our example, still more than by our words, exhort mankind to do penance and keep God's commandments.<sup>4</sup> Faithful to this mission, the Friars Minor from the very beginning spread themselves through every country, there to preach the Gospel and extend the kingdom of God. As early as the year 1220, five of them preached in Morocco the faith of Jesus Christ, and sealed it with their blood. In 1227, seven other Friars Minor were put to death at Ceuta in the same empire; and a flourishing Church soon rose in this inhospitable land, which had been watered by the first shedding of Franciscan blood. One of the disciples of St. Francis, Brother Agnello, became the first bishop.

In 1219, the Friars Minor, led by their Seraphic Father, penetrated into Egypt, where they devoted themselves to the work of converting infidels and winning back the

Provinces are under a Minister Provincial, assisted by the Custos and four Counsellors, all elected by the Provincial Chapter. The convents have Superiors, called Guardians, each of whom has a Vicar and his "Discreet Council." A Hospice or Residence is a community, which, being too small to have a Guardian, is governed by a Father President. In past centuries the Provinces on account of their extent, and the difficulties of communication, were divided into Custodies, each of which consisted of a certain number of convents, and was governed by a Custos subject to the authority of the Minister Provincial. Now a Custodia is the union of those convents which, being insufficient to form a Province, are ruled by a Custos (*Custos Regiminis*) with the same power as a Provincial. The word Custos then means either the Superior of a Custodia, part of a Province, or the Superior of an independent Custodia. In the Observance it also means the principal member of the Council of the Province.

<sup>4</sup> *The Legend of the Three Companions*, chap. x.

Coptic schismatics to the true faith. Thence they went to preach the Gospel in Abyssinia, Lybia, and the far off provinces of Ethiopia. The holy Patriarch also conducted his children to Syria, and established them in Palestine, where, after the departure of the Crusaders, they preserved, at the price of their blood, the places sanctified by the Life and Death of our Saviour.<sup>5</sup>

In 1233 Gregory IX. sent the Friars Minor to the Sultan of Damascus, to the Caliph of Bagdad and to the heathen princes of Georgia and the Caucasus. In the same year the Friars Minor penetrated into Persia where Blessed Gentile of the noble house of Finaguerra of Matelico was destined later to receive the palm of martyrdom. Thence they passed into the vast regions of India and there four of them, headed by Saint Thomas of Tolentino, shed their blood for Jesus Christ.

In 1245, Innocent IV. sent into Tartary a number of Friars Minor under the leadership of the celebrated John of Pian-Carpino, who had been a disciple of St. Francis and Provincial in Germany. In 1247, the same Pontiff sent Brother Andrew of Perugia on a like mission to Armenia, and soon after the conversion of this nation, one of her kings exchanged the splendour of a throne for the poor Franciscan habit. In 1253, the famous William of Ruysbrock accompanied by Brother Bartholomew of Cremona went to the Khan of Tartary as ambassador of the King, Saint Louis.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> About two thousand Franciscans were martyred in Palestine, and more than six thousand fell victims to the plague. The missions of the Holy Land, as well as the care of its sanctuaries, are still entrusted to the Franciscans of the Observance.

<sup>6</sup> The account of the travels of Ruysbrock and of John of Pian-Carpino has been published by the Société de Géographie in the fourth volume of *Le Recueil de voyages et de mémoires*. (Paris, 1839.) This interesting publication is preceded by a description of these two illustrious Franciscans.



Scarcely half a century after their foundation, the Friars Minor had penetrated everywhere, where there were heathens to be converted or heretics or schismatics to be reclaimed. In 1258, Pope Alexander IV. published a Bull addressed to the missionaries of the Order established in the countries of the Saracens, pagans, Greeks, Bulgarians, Cumans, Ethiopians, Syrians, Iberians, Alani, Gazathites, Goths, Ruthenians, Georgians, Nubians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Armenians, Indians, Tartars, Hungarians, the Christian slaves of the Turks, the other eastern heathens, and all the nations to whom they had preached the Gospel.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Blessed Odoric of Pordenone preaching the Word of God, traversed Armenia, Persia, India, Tartary, China and Thibet and found his brethren established in all these provinces. About the same the great Missionary, John of Montecorvino evangelized Armenia and Persia, passed into China, where he established the Christian religion, and converted the great Khan of Tartary. Pope Clement V. made him Archbishop of Cambalec (Pekin) and his legate in the East, with the mission of establishing in China seven episcopal Sees for the seven Religious of his Order who had been sent to him as suffragans.

We can only mention briefly the work of the Friars Minor in preparing the return of the Greek schismatics, which took place in 1274, at the Council of Lyons and their admirable apostolate in Malabar, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Servia, Bulgaria, Prussia, Livonia, Lithuania, Moldavia and Russia. While these thousands of Christian labourers fertilised these distant lands by their toil and their blood, others, following the example of St. Antony of Padua, worked in the very midst of Christian Europe. They attacked vice, combated heresy,

established peace between nations, converted souls, and consoled the Church in her pilgrimage through the world.

From the first century of its existence the Order of Friars Minor has, as we have seen, fulfilled its apostolic mission with indefatigable zeal. Its missionaries have identified themselves with every nation, in order to win them all to Jesus Christ. The blood of its countless martyrs has flowed on every shore.

The Friars Minor did not devote themselves solely to apostolic labours. From the very first they took a leading part in Christian learning, in theology, the study of the Holy Scriptures, and all the branches of sacred science. Franciscan doctors have occupied the first chairs of the most celebrated universities, such as Alexander of Hales, John de la Rochelle, St. Bonaventure, Adam de Marisco, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, Francis Mayronis, Nicholas de Lyre and many others. The Order, when still in its infancy, possessed the three-fold Aureola of martyrdom, apostleship and learning. We may add that the Church required it under obedience to furnish pastors to her people, and took from its ranks nuncios, legates, bishops, cardinals and popes.<sup>7</sup>

Among the persons whose remarkable holiness rendered the order illustrious during this early period, forty-nine have received from the Church the honour of beatification or canonization.

The Virgin of Assisi had also sent her heroic bands

<sup>7</sup> The First Order of St. Francis has up to this time given to the Church three hundred nuncios or legates, two thousand bishops, five hundred archbishops or patriarchs, sixty cardinals and five popes, Nicholas IV., Alexander V., Sixtus IV., Sixtus V., and Clement XIV. The Catholic Episcopacy reckons among its members at this present time, one cardinal and sixty archbishops or bishops belonging to the Order of Friars Minor.

into all the countries of Europe and even to the extreme East. The most beautiful virtues blossomed under the shadow of her convents. Twelve of the illustrious daughters of Francis and of Clare whose holiness was made manifest by miracles during these early days of the Order, have been proposed to our veneration by holy Church. The Order of Poor Ladies like that of the Friars Minor had also its martyrs. In the year 1259, the Tartars put to death in the environs of Cracow a community of sixty Poor Clares, and twelve Friars Minor. In 1292 the Poor Clares of Ptolomais suffered the same fate at the hands of the Saracens, thus winning the double crown of martyrdom and virginity.

The Order of Penance had also a large share in the blessings of the Seraphic Patriarch. It spread wonderfully over the whole world and bore early fruits of holiness and many of its members are ranked by the Church among her Saints. The Third Order was also, in the very beginning, consecrated by the martyrdom of Blessed Raymund Lullus.

Thus the work of Francis of Assisi, which was so lowly and small in its beginnings, expanded under the protection of Holy Church. The Palm which Innocent III. saw, in a mysterious dream, growing up at his feet, had become a great tree destined to shelter many generations.<sup>8</sup> After a second vision, this same Pontiff said of the Poor man of Assisi, "Yea, there indeed is the pious and holy man who will sustain the Church of God." Francis, as we have just seen, soon after began this great work by giving apostles, doctors and Saints to the Church.

<sup>8</sup> *Legend of St. Bonaventure*, chap. iii.

## PART II.

### *The Friars Minor of the Observance.*

THE great mission of St. Francis among Catholic nations was to make holy poverty esteemed and loved. He therefore made poverty the foundation of his Order, and bequeathed it to his sons as their most precious inheritance. "Let the Friars," so says his Rule, "have nothing of their own, neither house, nor land, nor any thing whatsoever. But while looking upon themselves as travellers and strangers, let them beg alms without fear or shame, because our Lord became poor for us in this world. Such, my dear Brothers, is the excellence of this most holy poverty, that it has made you heirs and kings of Heaven, and by stripping you of all earthly possessions, has exalted you in virtue. May it be your portion, for it leads direct to the land of the living. Be attached to it then with your whole soul, and never consent to have anything else under Heaven." The Friars Minor cannot hold either separately or in common any property or income for the insurance of their subsistence, they trust entirely in Providence. Thus, freed from all worldly considerations, the disciples of St. Francis can readily give themselves up to the contemplation of heavenly things and to the service of the Church and of souls. No other religious Order had before—nor has any other since—practised such complete renunciation.

But all hearts did not maintain this perfect state. All



had not the same trust in God. Even during the lifetime of St. Francis, some of his disciples showed tendencies contrary to the poverty he held so dear. After the death of the holy Patriarch these tendencies became more marked, they were encouraged by his successor, Brother Elias, and thenceforth some relaxation<sup>1</sup> manifested itself in the Order. St. Antony of Padua, Adam of Marisco, Cæsarius of Spires, and many other disciples of St. Francis strongly denounced the innovations, and endeavoured to preserve intact the inheritance of their Father. Blessed John of Parma, the seventh Minister General, attempted to root out the abuses which had still existed under his predecessors, and his work was continued by St. Bonaventure who is justly considered the second founder of the Order.

In the first half of the fourteenth century, the Rule again by degrees became less strict, and new abuses against poverty crept in. Favoured by the great schism of the West, the evil grew and became general. It in-

<sup>1</sup> The word relaxation has not in this instance its ordinary meaning. We do not wish to imply that there were any abuses contrary to the religious spirit, still less to that of Christian life, and this is clearly proved by history. The relaxation of which we speak was only a falling away from that high degree of poverty, which St. Francis wished to characterise his Order, a poverty so perfect that the great Pontiff, Innocent III., had at first deemed it too great for human endurance. The Conventual Friars Minor in spite of the dispensations which they have obtained from the Church still lead as hard a life as the most austere Orders. Although the dispensations which a small portion of the Order avail themselves of, were sanctioned and approved by the Church, we cannot doubt that St. Francis reserves still more abundant blessings for such of his children as observe his Rule intact without dispensations or mitigations. St. Francis received from God the assurance that the work he had founded should never perish, and that there would always exist in the Order religious who would inherit his spirit and faithfully observe his Rule.

creased so much that even, in the words of Leo X., the Order seemed to have almost entirely lost the spirit of St. Francis. But God watched over the work of His faithful servant Francis, He raised up religious who, imbued with the spirit of St. Antony of Padua and of Saint Bonaventure banded together, in order more faithfully to keep their Rule, and who succeeded in reforming the entire Order, regenerated it and brought it back to the practices and fervour of its early days. These religious known as Friars Minor of the Observance brought about a complete renovation of the Order. This is what Leo X. says in his Bull: "*Ite et vos in vineam meam.*" These religious, with the standard bearer of the Name of Jesus, Blessed Bernardine, at their head, supported by the Council of Constance, revived all over the world the Order which was languishing, and almost lifeless.<sup>2</sup> Such

<sup>2</sup> "Qui, signifera Nominis Jesu Beato Bernardino ductore et præside, sacri Concilii Constantiensis freti præsedis, *languentem* imo, pene mortuum, *per orbem universum, Ordinem* vivificarunt." Leo X, *Ite et vos*. Two disciples of St. John Capistran, in their life of this great servant of God, speak in the same way of the relaxation that was introduced in the Order about the middle of the fourteenth century, and of the reform carried out by the Friars Minor of the Observance. "Qui (Observantes)," says Nicholas of Fara, "Francisci eversam fere domum erexerunt," and Christopher of Varese adds: "Quasi totus Ordo Sancti Francisci corruerat viam suam, et vix reperiebatur qui puritatem Regulæ observare vellet." Boll. 23 Oct. These two biographers are speaking of what they actually witnessed. In the time of Brother Elias the abuses against the Rule consisted chiefly in the possession of money, and in a certain luxury of clothes and dwellings. In the beginning of the fifteenth century St. John of Capistran, notified to Pope Eugenius IV. this possession of money, as being one of the principal abuses to be reformed among the Conventuals. (*Life of the Saint*, by Father Christopher of Varese. Apud Boll. 23 Oct.) During the course of the fifteenth century, Father John of Brie, Doctor of the Sorbonne, ex-provincial of the French Conventuals, having joined the Observance, published in Paris a dissertation on the Decree of the Council of Constance in favour of the Fathers of the

of the Friars Minor as retained with the permission of the Holy See, the relaxations that had been made in the Rule were called Conventuals.

This regeneration of the Order by the Friars Minor of the Observance began about the year 1334, in the very heart of the Seraphic Province. A holy religious of the Convent of Foligno, John of Vallées, grieved at the attacks made upon that holy poverty so dear to his Seraphic Father, obtained from the Minister General, Gerard Odon, permission to retire with some of his brethren to the convent of Bruliano near Foligno,<sup>3</sup> there to observe the Rule in prayer, penance and the most extreme poverty. In 1351, after the death of Blessed John of Vallées to whom God gave the gift of miracles, the work of reform was continued by his disciples Blessed Gentile of Spoleto, Blessed Paul de Trinci, and Blessed Angelo of Monte Leone, a distinguished preacher and doctor of theology in the Seraphic Province. New convents were thus founded and filled with fervent religious. Later, on the work was temporarily discontinued by the Minister Gen

Observance, in which we read: "Ipsi Ministri (Conventuales) compellunt in communi conventus sibi subditos contributiones pecuniarias sibi solvere; et in particulari fratres dictorum conventuum confessores compellunt etiam sub privatione actuum legitimorum et eosdem cogunt pecunias solvere. Consequenter eos cogunt et compellunt in communi et in particulari pecunias habere quod est manifeste contra præceptum Regulæ. . . . Pecuniarum receptiones et possessiones vestium pretiosarum et multipliciter superfluum . . . per dictos Ministros et alios Regulæ transgressores carius amplexatæ continue crescunt et invalescunt." *Menorica elucidativa rationabilis separationis Fratrum Minorum de Observantiâ ab aliis Fratribus ejusdem Ordinis.* Jehan Petit, Paris 1499. The possession of funded property had already been introduced into the Order, but had not, so it seems, then become so general.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Umbria Serafica* the convent of Bruliano, situated in a desert place, was founded in 1272; the church was dedicated to the Apostle St. Bartholomew.

eral William Farinieri who wished to re-establish the rule in its original purity throughout the Order. Blessed Gentile of Spoleto died in the Convent of Bruliano in the year 1362.

In 1368, the work of reformation was recommenced in this same convent of Bruliano by Blessed Paul de Trinci<sup>4</sup> whose principal disciples were Blessed Angelo of Monte Leone and Blessed John of Stronconio,<sup>5</sup> both famous for their learning, their holiness, and the miracles they worked in their life time and after death—worthy in short of Blessed Paul de Trinci, their Master.

Blessed Paul, called also Paulet because of his short stature, was born at Foligno in 1309, of Count Vagnotio de Trinci<sup>6</sup> and Octava a daughter of the princely house of

<sup>4</sup> Wadding truly observes that Blessed Paul de Trinci only continued the work of reform which Blessed John of Vallées had commenced in 1334. "Habuit cooperarium successivum in restituendo ordinis nitore fratrem Paulutium Fulginatam—Qui feliciter inchoatum opus felicius promovit." T. vii., p. 168.

<sup>5</sup> According to some historians not the same as the disciple of Blessed John of Vallées.

<sup>6</sup> The house of Trinci, which reigned for a long time at Foligno, traced its descent from the old kings of Lombardy and the dukes of Spoleto (*Umbria Serafica*). It had given two cardinals to the Church, Lucian de Trinci (845) and Dominic de Trinci (1211). In the course of the fourteenth century two prelates of this illustrious house filled the episcopal See of Foligno. Paul de Trinci (1325—1363) who favoured the work of Blessed John of Vallées, and Onofrio de Trinci (1397—1403) who was the protector of Blessed Angelina of Marsciano, the promoter of the Cloistered Regular Third Order (*Italia Sacra*). Father Pulinari, in his manuscript chronicle (p. 4), expressly says that Blessed Paul de Trinci was brother (*fratre carnale*) to Count Hugolin de Trinci, lord of Foligno; this is also stated by Ottavio, Bishop of Assisi, in his *Archivium Portiunculæ*. Paul de Trinci, called also Paul of Foligno, has borne from time immemorial the title of *Blessed*, so also have John of Vallées, Gentile of Spoleto, Angelo of Monte Leone and John of Stronconio. In the history of the house of Trinci, by Durante Doria, Blessed Paul is repre-



Orsini. At fourteen years of age, the heir of the Trinci bade farewell to the world and his hopes, and took the habit of St. Francis in the convent of his native town, where he wished to be admitted as a lay-brother in spite of his refined education and high birth. This young nobleman having thus become voluntarily poor, was seen to beg from door to door in the very town where his birth entitled him to the highest rank. His life was spent in acts of humility, in penance and prayer in which he attained to a high degree of perfection. God bestowed upon him the gift of miracles, and also the joys of sensible devotion and ecstasy.

This great servant of God unceasingly besought the Lord to rekindle in the Order the spirit of the Seraphic Patriarch. In 1368, when he was sixty years old, God inspired him to recommence the work of Blessed John of Vallées, whose disciple he had been. The Minister General of the Order, Thomas of Farignano, being at Foligno for the purpose of presiding at the Chapter of the Seraphic Province, Blessed Paul asked of him the convent of Bruliano through his brother Hugolin de Trinci, lord of Foligno.

The Minister General granted his desire, and the Observance began to revive the spirit of the Order in the Province which had been its cradle. Blessed Paul de Trinci gathered round him a great number of religious who

sented with an aureola as a sign of beatitude. About two centuries after his death, his body, which had first been interred in the church of St. Francis at Foligno, was transferred to the church of St. Saviour on Mount Verchiano in the diocese of Spoleto; we are told in the *Umbria Serafica*, that every year the people went in procession to this church in order to venerate his tomb. In 1671, according to the same chronicle, the Bishop of Spoleto transferred the relics of Blessed Paul de Trinci to the parochial church of Verchiano where they are still venerated by the faithful.

desired to lead a more perfect life, some even came from France, one of whom, Blessed Peter of Narbonne, was martyred at Jerusalem in 1382.<sup>7</sup>

In the year 1370, Pope Gregory XI. hearing of the holy life led by the religious of Bruliano, sent them, from Avignon, on July the twenty-eighth, a Bull which was the first granted to the Observance.<sup>8</sup>

The Minister General, Thomas of Farignano, becoming more and more favourable to the work of reform, permitted it to extend over the Seraphic Province, and thus Blessed Paul de Trinci was enabled to take possession of several convents which had been founded or inhabited by St. Francis, such as Fonte Colombo, where our Lord gave him the Rule, Greccio, Stronconio, *de' Carceri* near Assisi, *del Monte* near Perugia, etc. Father Leonard Rossi de Giffone, Minister General of the Order, visited these fervent communities in 1374, and gave the government of them to Blessed Paul de Trinci, with permission to establish similar ones in the other provinces of Italy.

<sup>7</sup> "On the one hand," says Fodéré. "this carelessness of the Superiors (in doing away with abuses), and on the other the renown of the holiness of Brother Paulinus (Paul de Trinci) and of his companions, a renown so world wide that he seemed as it were a second St. Francis, caused a great number of Italian and French religious to go to Bruliano expressly to see this convent of St. Bartholomew, where the heavenly flame being enkindled within them they became so fervent, that on their return to their convents they reformed all abuses by their good example and thus insensibly brought about a reformation, so that each vied with the other in doing good and all so gently and without affectation, either in the stuff or the shape of the habit, that from that time out there was no longer any dissension in the Order." *Narration historique et topographique des couvents de l'Ordre de Saint François et des monastères de Sainte Claire érigés en la Province anciennement appelée de Bourgogne, à présent de S. Bonaventure. . . .* Par le Père Jacques Fodéré, Lyons, 1612.

<sup>8</sup> Father Pulinari, *MSS. Chronicle of the Province of Tuscany*, p. 5. Father Michael Angelo of Naples, *Chron. Hist.*, leg. T. I., p. 98.

The Ministers General, Luigi, Donati, Pietro de Cassana, and Martino San Giorgi, were also very favourable to the Observance. In 1387, the Minister General, Henry Alfieri, named Blessed Paul de Trinci Commissary General for the fifteen communities which he had established, and for those he might establish in the future.

In the year 1388, Blessed John of Stronconio and Blessed Angelo of Monte Leone, were sent by the new Commissary General into Tuscany, which country they evangelized, and founded at Fiesole a convent to which were admitted Blessed Thomas of Florence, Nicholas Uzziano and many other noble Florentines. At Cortona they were given a convent near the tomb of St. Margaret. They also reformed the convents of Cetona and of Colombaio, founded by St. Francis, besides many others. Blessed Angelo of Monte Leone died in Tuscany after having worked a great number of miracles; the chroniclers of the province mention that he raised three dead persons to life.

In 1390, the Italian Fathers of the Observance possessed about twenty-three convents, some in the Seraphic Province, others in Rome, in the Marches, and in Tuscany. On the seventeenth of September in the same year, Blessed Paul de Trinci, full of years and of merits, piously fell asleep in the Lord. The Minister General, Henry Alfieri, selected Blessed John of Stronconio to succeed him in the office of Commissary General.

The latter worked zealously to consolidate and extend the Observance in Italy. He had the consolation of guiding the first steps of St. Bernardine of Siena in the religious life, and went to receive in Heaven the reward of his labours, after having been permitted to see the great destiny our Lord had in store for his spiritual family.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> He was born at Stronconio of the noble and ancient family of Vici, which was of French origin, and was descended from Charlemagne

In 1421, the Minister General, Angelo Salvetti, anxious to promote the growth of the Observance, named St. Bernardine of Siena as successor to Blessed John of Stronconio in the government of the Fathers of the Observance in Umbria and Tuscany, and named another Commissary General for the religious of the Marches and the other Provinces of Italy. St. Bernardine was to the Observance what St. Bernard was to the Cistercian Order. Although not directly the promoter of this great work of regeneration, he was its chief support, its indefatigable propagator, its light and its guide. The Observance owes to him that sudden and immense increase that consoled the Church in the beginning of the fifteenth century and rendered her most powerful and providential assistance during the terrible crisis of the great schism of the West.

Whilst Blessed Paul de Trinci was carrying out the reformation of the Order in Italy, his example, as we said, gave rise to a similar work in France. Some religious of the province of Touraine obtained from the Minister General permission to live together, in order to follow the Rule in its original purity. Father John Pheleppin, the Provincial, gave them the convent of Mirabeau near Poitiers.<sup>10</sup> God blessed their pious efforts, a second community was founded at Laval, and a third at Dôle, by Father Pierre of Dôle.<sup>11</sup> The Observance spread rapidly through the provinces of Touraine, of France and of Burgundy, and the Minister General seeing

(*Vita del miracoloso B. Antonio Vici da Stroncone*). He received into the Order his nephew, Blessed Antony of Stronconio, whom the Church has proposed to our veneration. (See his life, February the seventh.)

<sup>10</sup> Father Fodéré, already quoted, page 158 and 624.

<sup>11</sup> In 1412, the convent of Dôle in Burgundy, where the Observance was somewhat relaxed, was given to St. Colette, who established there her first community of Colettines.



these communities so filled with the true spirit of St. Francis, did all in his power to help on the work of regeneration. He even gave the French Fathers of the Observance a Commissary General chosen from amongst themselves, and selected for this office Blessed Thomas de la Cour, a very learned and holy religious as the martyrology of the Order tells us.

During the early part of the fifteenth century, the French Fathers of the Observance had many difficulties to contend with, and having been deprived of their Commissary General, they appealed to the Council of Constance to enable them to follow without molestation the Rule of St. Francis. The Fathers of the Council took the advice of the Minister General and of the most enlightened Fathers of the Order<sup>12</sup> on this subject, and with their consent published a decree which authorised the French Fathers of the Observance to hold their Chapters, to name their Provincial Vicars and a Vicar General whose election should be confirmed in three days by the Minister General of the Order. On this first occasion, the council itself appointed to this office Nicholas Rodolphe who was succeeded by Blessed Thomas de la Cour, elected in 1419, at the General Chapter held in the convent of Chollet. This decree of the council, confirmed, in 1420, by Martin V., gave to the French Franciscans of the Observance a separate government and the power of selecting superiors from amongst their own ranks, under the authority of the Minister General. This arrangement tended to promote

<sup>12</sup> Father Pulinari says in his MSS. Chronicle of the Province of Tuscany, page 9: "*Quali Padri del Concilio, dal consentimento e buona concordia di Fra Antonio de Pereto ministro generale e degli altri ministri e maestri che vi erano, ordinarono che li suddetti frati si eligessero un Vicario, il quale pero il Ministro generale dovessi confermare . . .*"

the strict observance of the Rule, and at the same time did not at all lessen the substantial unity of the Order.

About the year 1397, Blessed Peter of Villacrete, authorized by the Minister General, Henry Alfieri, established the Observance in Spain, whence it extended to Portugal. His first disciple and principal assistant was St. Peter Regalati. Two other of his disciples, Blessed Peter Santoyo and Blessed Lopez de Salazar, were very successful in spreading the observance throughout the kingdom. The decree of the Council of Constance was extended by Martin V., to the Fathers of the Observance in Spain, and consequently all the Ultramontane Provinces became subject to it.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The Observance in France and Spain, in virtue of the decree of Constance, confirmed by Martin V., named its own Provincial Vicars and a Vicar General, and was governed successively by Father Nicholas Rodolphe (1415), Blessed Thomas de la Cour (1419), and Father William Josselin (1424). The Observance in Italy and the Cismontane Provinces was governed by a Commissary General appointed directly by the Minister General. This office was filled by Blessed Paul de Trinci (1374), Blessed John of Stronconio (1390), St. Bernardine of Siena (1421), Blessed Nicholas Uzzanio (1424), Blessed Angelo of Civitella (1427). In 1431 St. John Capistran, as we shall see, was made by Eugenius IV. Apostolic Commissary of all the Family of the Observance, in 1438 he appointed St. Bernardine Vicar General of the Observance in Italy. In 1442, the whole Order being governed by one of its own members, Blessed Albert of Sartiano, the Observance had no Vicars General. In 1443, Eugenius IV. commanded the Minister General to name St. John Capistran Vicar General of the Observance for Italy, and Blessed John Maubert for France and Spain. Before the end of his three years of office, St. John Capistran obtained from Eugenius IV. the famous Bull, *Ut sacra Ordinis Minorum*, in virtue of which the two families of the Observance named their own Vicars General whose appointment the Minister General had to confirm in three days, the Observance was governed by this Pontifical Ordinance until Leo X. decreed, in 1517, that in future the Minister General of the Order should be elected only by the Fathers of the Observance, and that he should be always chosen from amongst their number. Pius II., it should be observed, had declared in 1464 that the

As may have been remarked, the Friars Minor of the Observance began the reform of the Order and continued it by the authority of the Church and their own superiors. The Generals, who desired the return of their Family to its primitive fervour, did all in their power to favour these chosen ones of their flock, and gave to the Fathers of the Observance, Commissaries or Vicars General, in order that under the guidance of one of their own members, they might more easily be faithful to their Rule, and guard themselves from the laxity that had crept into the rest of the Order.

Soon after its appearance, the Observance shed a brilliant lustre on the Church and gave her a number of apostles, whose holiness revived the early days of the Seraphic Order. We know that when the Order was in its infancy, St. Antony of Padua was looked upon as a prodigy of holiness, and as an apostle of unheard of power. Gubernatis says, "I believe I do not exaggerate when I state that at the time of the beginning of the Observance, many Antonys of Padua appeared, such as Bernardine of Siena, John Capistran, James della Marca, Bernardine of Feltre, James Primadizzi, Mark of Bologna, Albert of Sartiano, and many others whom the Holy See had sent, at the request of kings, princes, and great cities, to evangelize nations, sanctify the world, enrich Heaven and despoil hell."<sup>14</sup> St. Bernardine of Siena and his three illustrious disciples, St. John Capistran, St. James della

Vicars General and Provincial of the Observance were really such Ministers as were required by the Rule. "*Vicarii ipsi,*" says this Pope, "*qui vobis præsunt veri et indubitati vestri Ministri, et tales quales B. Franciscus per Regulam præfatam intendebat, sunt et perpetuo erunt, differentes a prædictis solo nomine.*" This explanation of the government of the Observance will help the reader to understand what follows.

<sup>14</sup> *Orbis Seraphicus*, T. vi., c. 14.

Marca, and Blessed Albert of Sartiano, were the four columns, so to speak, of the Observance.

In Italy St. Bernardine carried on his apostolic labours with admirable zeal, for a period of forty years. Like St. Antony of Padua, his audience often numbered as many as thirty thousand persons. Blessed Albert of Sartiano traversed Egypt, Palestine and Syria, brought back to the bosom of the Church the Greeks of Constantinople, and the Jacobites, and accompanied them to the Council of Florence, whilst Blessed James Primadizzi was engaged in the conversion of the Armenians. He also preached in Italy to audiences of fifty thousand persons.<sup>15</sup> St. James della Marca evangelized Italy, the East, Norway, Denmark, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Albania, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Croatia, Transylvania, and Russia. He baptized two hundred thousand pagans,<sup>16</sup> and converted a countless number of sinners, heretics and schismatics. In the kingdom of Hungary alone, he reconciled fifty thousand heretics to the Church.

Still more wonderful was the apostolate of St. John Capistran. This latter travelled through Italy, France, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Saxony, Poland, Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia and Russia, everywhere working miracles and converting multitudes of sinners, heretics, schismatics and Jews. His presence created such excitement among the people, that the public places were too small to hold the crowds that flocked to hear him. He preached in the open country in presence of sixty-thousand, a hundred thousand and sometimes even a hundred and fifty-thousand persons. The life of this zealous apostle was crowned by the victory of Belgrade,

<sup>15</sup> "Ad ejus conciones quinquaginta millia auditorum frequenter cum impetu confluisse recensebantur." *Menologium*, p. 1589.

<sup>16</sup> Lesson V. of his office, November the twenty-eighth.



which was the salvation of Christian Europe. Never, perhaps, since the days of the apostles has any man had greater influence over the populace than St. John Capistran.<sup>17</sup>

After these remarkable men, came a number of religious of the Observance famous for their learning, holiness and miracles.

According to the testimony of Christopher of Varese, and of Nicholas of Fara, companions and historians of St. John Capistran, many then joined the Observance who had been trained by St. Bernardine and St. John Capistran. These religious became eminent for their learning and holiness, and many of them worked numerous miracles after their death. "Quorum plerique," says Nicholas of Fara, "post dormitionem multis signis, multisque miraculis coruscarunt."<sup>18</sup> During the fifteenth century, and at the beginning of the sixteenth, the Observance counted amongst its numbers twenty-seven heroes of holiness who have been canonized,<sup>19</sup> and many others who have received the title of Blessed, on account of the homage they have always received.

The life of these indefatigable workers was entirely consecrated to the service of the Church and of souls. Sometimes employed as nuncios, legates or apostolic commissaries, by princes and nations, by Martin V., Eugenius IV., Nicholas V., Calixtus III., Pius II., Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., and many other Pontiffs, they aided

<sup>17</sup> See his life written by Father Christopher of Varese and Father Nicholas of Fara who were his disciples and the companions of his apostolate. (*Apud Boll.* T. X. Oct.)

<sup>18</sup> *Acta Sanctorum.* Life of St. John of Capistran. T. x. Oct.

<sup>19</sup> See the list at the end of this Historical Sketch. During the succeeding centuries the Observance gave to the Church a still greater number of Saints and of Blessed, who are proposed to public veneration. These number at least seventy-eight.

considerably in repairing the evils caused by the great schism of the West, and brought to the Council of Florence, Greeks, Maronites, Armenians and Jacobites. In 1437, Blessed James Primadizzi was placed at the head of a number of missionaries of the Order, who evangelized twenty-six different nations, Greeks, Armenians, Saracens, Georgians, Indians, Persians, Medes, Tartars, etc. The Franciscans of the Observance extinguished once more the dangerous sect of the Fraticelli. They also fought against the Manichean, Hussite, Taborite, and Patarin schismatics and heretics in Italy, Germany, and the other northern provinces. They preached a crusade against the Turks who threatened to invade civilised Europe, suppressed Jewish usury by establishing *Monti di Pietà*, in short, they rendered signal services to the Church both in Christian and heathen countries.

Established and supported by these apostolic men, and protected by the Holy See, the Family of the Observance rapidly spread and multiplied throughout Europe, in France, Spain, Portugal, England, Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, Bosnia, Saxony, Bohemia, Hungary, etc. In Italy, St. Bernardine of Siena founded or reformed three hundred monasteries of Friars and two hundred convents of Poor Clares.<sup>20</sup>

We are told by contemporary biographers that St. John Capistran established convents of the Observance in Italy, France, Poland, and in all the provinces of Germany. He received at Cracow one hundred and thirty students or professors of the University and two hundred at Vienna in Austria. Father Christopher of Varese, who wrote after the death of St. John Capistran and

<sup>20</sup> Terrinca *Theatrum Etrusco-Minoriticum*. p. 126.

during the lifetime of St. James della Marca, says, "Thanks to the care of the blessed Father John Capistran and the zeal of St. Bernardine and of the holy old man James della Marca, *who is still living*, the convents of the Observance have spread so wonderfully over Christendom, that there is now hardly a single province where these houses have not been established. . . . The immense number of religious of the Observance is so well known all over the world that my testimony is superfluous. Seeing the wonders worked daily by John Capistran crowds went from town to town to hear him preach, and often did twenty, thirty, and sometimes even forty young men receive at his hands the habit of St. Francis in sight of all the people."<sup>21</sup>

The Friars Minor of the Observance were entrusted with the missions which the Order carried on in heathen countries, and under their supervision new missions were founded. They were given the custody of the Sanctuaries in Palestine, of Mount Alvernia, and of St. Mary of the Angels, the cradle of the Order. The Observance finally spread through the entire Order of Friars Minor and insensibly brought about its regeneration.

We have still a word to say about the different phases which the Observance passed through, before the general reform of the Order was accomplished.

In 1430, the Order of Friars Minor was divided into two distinct branches, the Observance and the Con-

<sup>21</sup> *Acta Sanctorum*. Life of St. John Capistran, T. x. Oct. Æneas Sylvius, later Pope Pius II., in a letter addressed to the Cardinal of Fermo, in the life-time of St. John Capistran (1455), speaks in the following terms of the progress of the Observance: "*Sunt supra viginti millia Fratrum qui de Observantiâ dicuntur; tota Christianitas his plena est. . . . Monasteria Conventualium minui ac ruere cernimus, Observantium augentur et florent.*" *Orbis Seraphicus*. Lib. VI. *Acta Sanctorum*. T. x. Oct. p. 316.

ventuals. They, however, formed but one body under one head who was the Minister General of the entire Order, the successor of St. Francis. This division, which was introduced during the fourteenth century, was confirmed and approved by the Church at the Council of Constance, in 1415.<sup>22</sup>

St. John Capistran had only recently begun his wonderful apostolate in Italy. This great servant of our Lord sadly deplored the division of the Order, and especially the laxity of so many of its members. As the division of Fathers of the Observance and Conventuals had been occasioned by the relaxation of the Rule, the complete reunion of the two branches could only be brought about by the return of the Conventuals to its strict observance. St. John Capistran persuaded Pope Martin V. to summon a general Chapter to consider the two great questions of the reform and reunion of the Order. The Chapter was held at Assisi, in 1430, Cardinal Cervantes, the Pope's Legate, presiding. The Cardinal summoned John Capistran to aid him by his advice in the questions to be determined. The Minister General, Antony of Massa, was deposed, because he was too weak to repress the abuses against the Rule, and in his place was elected William of Casale, a learned and virtuous religious, well skilled in the management of difficult matters. Though he was a Conventual, he had always been favourably inclined towards the Observance. St.

<sup>22</sup> This Council published the decree we have already spoken of, in its ninth session, on May the thirteenth, 1415; it confirmed the name of Friars Minor of the Observance which had been given to those who faithfully observed the Rule. The others were called the Conventual Friars Minor, and they are thus designated by Eugenius IV. in his Bull *Super gregelem*, of 1431. Leo X., in 1517, confirmed both these titles. According to some writers, the Conventuals were so called because they lived in large convents.



John Capistran was entrusted with the work of drawing up the Statutes enjoining a perfect observance of the Rule, and suppressing all the abuses of the Conventuals. These Statutes were called Martinian, because they were composed by order of Martin V. and approved by him, and were intended to apply to the entire Order, for thus only could the reform of the Conventuals and the complete union of the Order be effected.

The Cardinal Legate had these Statutes read in full chapter. The Fathers of the Observance and the Conventuals agreed to them, and the latter, moreover, bound themselves by oath to observe them, and to renounce all the mitigations introduced by them against the purity of the Rule. The new Minister General took the further oath never to ask for any dispensation of these Constitutions. Thus by this great act the entire Order was reformed, and the two branches were to be united in consequence, and the Observance gave up their General and Provincial Vicars. But scarcely had the Chapter separated, than the Conventuals, regretting their promise, made the Cardinal Legate absolve them from their oath. The Martinian Statutes were however observed in principle, and St. John Capistran was associated with the Minister General in the government of the Order. The Cardinal Legate ordered both to work for the reform of the Conventuals by making them adopt the reforming statutes which had just been published.

After the Chapter, the Minister General William of Casale and St. John Capistran began together a visitation of the Order. Their presence at first had a wonderful effect but the zeal of William of Casale soon abated. Abuses and laxity existed to such an extent among the Conventuals in consequence of wars, epidemics and especially the great schism of the West, that he consid-

ered himself unable to remedy the evil, and so for the peace of consciences, he obtained from Martin V. the Bull "*Ad Statum Ordinis*," which authorised him, whenever he was unable to reform a convent, to dispense it from Franciscan poverty. This was the first general dispensation the Holy See granted to the Conventuals.

It was a great sorrow to St. John Capistran to see his hopes crushed when he had laboured so hard and had accompanied the Minister General during four months of his visitation, in order to bring about the reform and union of the Order. As these efforts were not seconded by him, the Saint saw that the union of the Fathers of the Observance with the Conventuals would only lessen the fervour of the former, and that the reform of the Order could only be carried out by separating the reformed from the unreformed, and by multiplying the true observers of the Rule.<sup>23</sup> The Fathers of the Observance, indeed, went on increasing, whilst those who made use of the dispensations decreased daily. It was thus that almost

<sup>23</sup> In principle St. John Capistran was very anxious for a complete union of the two branches, for he thought this the best means of reforming the entire Order. Accordingly he disapproved of the French Observance asking for a separate government at the Council of Constance, but experience soon changed his views, as we are told by his disciple, Father Christopher of Varese, "*Cernens igitur Pater (Capistranus) Ordinem divisum esse, et mente revolvens quantum sit bonum et jucundum habitare fratres in unum, cœpit scissuram matris suæ, sacrosanctæ Religionis, et discordiam fratrum suorum immenso dolore deflere. Cœpit etiam in illo principio, antequam veritatem per experientiam agnosceret, contrarius esse et molestus illis Fratribus qui Bullam divisionis impetraverant. . . . Videntes (postea) Pater et animo pertractans totum Ordinem non posse reformari, considerans nihilominus quod Observantes a Conventualibus molestias multas sustinerent, ex quibus in obsequio divino et observatione Regulæ plurimum impediabantur, doluit se unquam contrarium fuisse illis Fratribus Franciæ, qui Bullas a Conciliis et a Papa pro eorum quieta vita impetraverant.*" *Acta Sanctorum*, T. x., Oct.

the entire Order was imperceptibly and quietly reformed.<sup>24</sup> St. John Capistran fearing lest this union might bring about the ruin of the Observance, by introducing Conventual customs had recourse to Eugenius IV., lately raised to the Chair of Peter, and entreated that Pontiff, whose elevation to the Papal dignity he had predicted, to re-establish the Observance as it was before the Chapter of Assisi, that is to say, to restore to it its Vicars together with its separate and distinct life without severing the substantial unity of the Order. Eugenius IV., full of esteem

<sup>24</sup> The Conventuals never adopted the Martinian Statutes, considering them too severe. The Fathers of the Observance, on their side, were satisfied with the old Constitutions of the Order, which they had so far followed, and which were far more severe than the Martinian Statutes. In re-establishing the purity of the Rule in the Order, the Friars Minor of the Observance made no new rules, they merely observed those which had governed the Order from the beginning, but the practice of which the Conventuals had neglected. These first Constitutions of the Order dated from the General Chapter presided over by Gregory IX., in 1239, on the occasion of the deposition of Brother Elias, and the election of Albert of Pisa. Under the first three Generals, as the historian of the time, Brother Salimbene, tells us, the Order had no Constitutions, the holy and pious practices established by St. Francis being sufficient, but the new family of religious having increased so wonderfully, the necessity of embodying these practices in a set of Constitutions was soon recognised. This was done in 1239. At the General Chapter of Narbonne in 1260, St. Bonaventure was satisfied with enacting a slight modification of the first Constitutions. "Non erant ordinatæ," says Brother Salimbene, "quas processu temporis, ordinavit Frater Bonaventura Generalis Minister, et parum addidit de suo, sed pene eas taxavit in aliquibus locis." *Chronica Fr. Salimbene Parmensis*. These Constitutions were called *Narbonnenses* because they were revised by the Chapter of Narbonne; they were also called Constitutions of St. Bonaventure. They were again revised at the General Chapter of Assisi, in 1354, by the Minister General, William Farmier, who endeavoured to make the entire Order adopt them. These old Constitutions, added to as occasion arose, by the General Chapters, have remained in force till these days in the family of the Observance.

and affection for John Capistran granted his request, and promised him the protection of the Holy See. He then placed the Saint at the head of the entire family of the Observance, with the title of Apostolic Commissary and with very extensive powers. John Capistran held this office, to the great good of his spiritual family, from 1431 till 1438.<sup>25</sup> He then requested Eugenius IV. to appoint St. Bernardine of Siena Vicar General of the Observance in Italy. The Pope gave his consent to this project, and William of Casale, Minister General, hastening to carry out the wish of the Sovereign Pontiff, appointed St. Bernardine his Vicar General, and conferred upon him, for the government of the Observance in Italy, all the powers which he himself possessed over the whole Order.

William of Casale, Minister General, having died at Florence, February the second, 1442, Eugenius IV. named Blessed Albert of Sartiano Vicar General of the Order, till the General Chapter, which was to be held at Padua in the following year. The wish of the holy Pontiff was that he should work at the reform of the Conventual Franciscans. Albert of Sartiano, a disciple of Bernardine of Siena, was truly one of the pillars and one of the greatest glories of the Observance. The Conventuals of Venetia, appreciating his great merits, elected him for their Provincial. In his capacity of Vicar General of the Order, his authority extended over the Conventual Franciscans as well as those of the Observance. This being so, St. Bernardine obtained permission to retire from the office of Vicar General of the Observance in Italy. He had no immediate successor, the whole Order being then governed by a religious of the Observance. Albert of Sartiano sent St. John Capistran as Vicar

<sup>25</sup> Gonzaga, *De origine seraphica religionis*, p. 12.



General to France and the other ultramontane Provinces, there to labour for the reform of the Conventuals and the extension of the Observance, and Eugenius IV. named him Apostolic Nuncio, so that he might be able to work in those countries for the general interests of the Church.

About the middle of the year 1443, Blessed Albert of Sartiano presided over the General Chapter held at Padua where the, Franciscans of the Observance and the Conventuals had assembled, in order to elect a new Minister General. Eugenius IV. wished a member of the Observance to be selected for this office, and had even fixed upon Albert of Sartiano who had already governed the Order with so much wisdom, and whose election was almost assured, but St. Bernardine, fearing to cause discontent among the Conventuals, dissuaded the Pope from this project, and, having been chosen to make the election, named Father Antony Rusconi, a very zealous and holy man.<sup>26</sup>

The new General tried at first to reform the Conventuals, but his efforts being unsuccessful, he confined himself to favouring the extension of the Observance.<sup>27</sup> At the close of the General Chapter of Padua, Eugenius

<sup>26</sup> *Secoli Serafici*, p. 90. *Manuale dei Fratři Minori*, p. 184. Rodulph, Lib. II., p. 191. Almost the same thing happened in 1464 at the General Chapter of Perugia. The electors not being able to agree as to the successor of Father James of Sarzuela, appealed to St. James della Marca. "Name Father Francis of Savona who is destined to become a Cardinal and a Pope," replied the Saint. Francis of Savona was elected Minister General, and in 1471 he was elevated to the Papal dignity under the title of Sixtus IV. St. James della Marca lived to see his prophecy fulfilled.

<sup>27</sup> *Manuale dei Fratři Minori*, p. 186. Till then the Minister General of the Order had taken the title of *Minister Generalis Ordinis Minorum*. Father Antony Rusconi was the first who took the title of *Minister Generalis totius Ordinis Minorum*, since employed, in order to show that he was the head of all the Friars Minor, of those of the Observance as well as of the Conventuals.

IV., in order to facilitate the government of the Observance, which had already spread most wonderfully, divided it into two Families, and commanded the new Minister General to appoint St. John Capistran and Blessed John Maubert Vicars General of the Cismontane and Ultramontane branches. The Sovereign Pontiff himself confirmed this double election.<sup>28</sup>

St. John Capistran had already obtained the Pope's consent to the Observance being governed by Vicars General, appointed by the Minister General. This precaution seemed to him insufficient. He feared that too great a dependence of the Friars of the Observance upon those who had not been reformed, might bring about amongst the former a relaxation in the severity of the Rule. In order to guard against this danger he obtained from Eugenius IV. the Bull *Ut Sacra Ordinis Minorum*, which established for the whole branch of the Observance provisions similar to those which the Council of Constance had adopted for the French Fathers of the Observance. In accordance with this Bull given about the year 1445, each of the two Families of the Observance holds its Chapters, elects its Vicars General, whose election the Minister General must confirm in three days,

<sup>28</sup> *The Cismontane family* comprised Italy, the adjacent islands, Austria, Poland, Turkey, etc. *The Ultramontane family* (that is, situated with regard to the Italians, *beyond the Alps*) extended over France, Spain, Belgium, Rhenish Prussia, the British Isles, and later on the New World. In 1517, Leo X. maintained this division of the Order into the two families, the Minister General was taken alternately from each, the other naming a Commissary General. It should be observed that this division of the Observance was purely administrative, and had no other object than that of facilitating the government of this great body. These two sections of the Observance in reality only formed one Institute, one Order, one Family. (See the splendid letter of St. John Capistran to the General Chapter of the ultramontane family of the Observance, twenty-third of October.)

each Province elects its own Vicars, and the Vicars General as well as Provincial, who are only appointed for three years, have the same authority as the Ministers over their subordinates. The supreme head of the Order was, however, for some time longer taken from among the Conventuals. His authority extended over all the Friars Minor whether Conventuals or Fathers of the Observance, who indeed only formed one body, and thus was the substantial unity of the Order maintained.<sup>29</sup>

But the Conventuals saw with grief that they were losing a considerable portion of the Order which had become famous for men illustrious for holiness, learning, the friendship of popes, and the veneration of the people. They endeavoured therefore to obtain from Nicholas V.

<sup>29</sup> In the course of the fifteenth century the Conventuals were sometimes called *Brothers of the Community*, because, according to some authors, of the common and unreformed life that they led. The title of *Friars of the Observance of the Community* was given to the Reformed who remained under the immediate authority of Conventual superiors. The other Friars of the Observance, and these were the most numerous, had their Provincial Vicars, and a Vicar General under the control of the Minister General of the Order. These latter were called *Friars of the Observance of the Family*, because they were divided into ultramontane and cismontane families, and *Brothers of the Bull*, because of the Pontifical Bull which gave them a separate government. The Observance of the Community, doubtless because of its forced relations with non-reformed superiors, followed a less strict rule than the Observance of the Family, the members of which were called, at least in France, according to Father Fodéré, *Friars Minor of the Strict Observance*. It is indeed worthy of remark that the Saints and Blessed of the Observance who lived in the fifteenth century and before Leo X., all belong to the Observance of the Family subject to the Vicars General. The generic name of *Reformed* was also given at this time to all those who followed the Rule without dispensation or mitigation. In 1517 Leo X. incorporated the Observance of the Family with that of the Community and the smaller Reforms then existing, and suppressed these different appellations. The name of *Cordeliers* was formerly given in France alike to the Fathers of the Observance, and to the Conventuals.

the revocation of the Bull of Eugenius IV. *Ut sacra Ordinis Minorum*, and some members of the Observance supported this project under the pretext of uniting the Order. Saint John Capistran, then Vicar General of the Observance, (1449,) was deeply grieved by this attempt which he feared would bring about the ruin of his spiritual family. At this critical moment he had recourse to his usual weapons, he prayed and caused prayers to be said, and made his religious fast and do penance, in order to ward off the danger which threatened the Observance.

God soon comforted His servant. Blessed Francis of Pavia<sup>30</sup> who spent much time in contemplation and was favoured with wonderful graces, was zealously fulfilling his superior's wish with tears and fervent entreaties, when our Lord deigned to appear to him, and said. Why art thou troubled? Whose work is this? Whose family? Is it not Mine? Then I will make it prosper, increase, and become powerful: "*Ego crescere faciam in gentem magnam, quæ præ multitudine numerari non poterit*,"<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Blessed Francis of Pavia died at Spoleto in 1456, famous for his miracles and prophecies. "Ex nobili Beccariorum familia oriundus," says the Menologium, "divitiis, potentia et virtute ita abundavit, ut adhuc sæcularis suis sumptibus regimenti cujusdam exercitum duxerit, strenueque militavit. Religiosus factus. . . admirabiliter florescebat summa humilitate et jugi oratione; obedientiam, castimoniam et paupertatem magnifice sectabatur. . . in excellentissimæ suæ caritatis testimonium, angelum quemdam humanâ formâ indutum aliquando pascebat. Lupo sibi familiarissimo asellum, fratrum eleemosynis onustum, ad aedes reducendum sæpius committebat. . . mira spiritu prophetico præicebat et clarus sanctitate ac miraculis excedebat a vita." XVI Augusti.

<sup>31</sup> These words of our Lord were fulfilled from day to day; the Observance continued to increase. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Leo X. incorporated with the Observance the various reforms of lesser importance which existed in the Order, so that many convents and whole provinces of the Conventuals became reformed and passed over to it. In 1680 the Observance numbered sixty thousand friars and forty thou-



Who has formed this family out of so many different nations? Who has made it multiply in so short a time and in spite of so many difficulties? It is I Who have done all this, and I will still protect it against its enemies." <sup>32</sup>

St. John Capistran having been informed of this revelation, communicated it in his turn to the principal members of his spiritual family, in order to encourage and console them in the hour of trial. He then appealed directly to Nicholas V., whose election to the Papacy he had predicted, and obtained from him that the Bull of Eugenius IV. should remain in force at least for the Cis-montane members of the Observance. Calixtus III. afterwards modified this Bull, but, as the same Saint had foretold, his successor Pius II. restored it to full force in the two Families of the Observance.

In 1472, another storm threatened the Observance. Sixtus IV. had been induced to believe that it would be advantageous to the Order to restore it to a perfect unity by the fusion of the Conventual Franciscans and those of the Observance, and by the suppression of the Bull of Eugenius IV. Although this Pontiff had been a Conven-

sand nuns in one hundred and forty-eight Provinces (*Menologium*.) In 1762 they numbered seventy-two thousand in one hundred and ninety-five Provinces. The great revolutions which have since overturned Europe, inflicted great losses on all the Religious Orders: the Observance, though weakened, remained the most numerous of the Friars Minor.

<sup>32</sup> Wadding. *Acta Sanctorum*, T. x., Octobris. *Vita S. Joannis a Capistrano*, *Comm. præv.* Our Lord here renewed His promise to St. Francis, when He said to him: "Cur tu pauper homuncio conturbaris, an ego te super Religionem meam sic pastorem institui, ut me principalem nescias esse patronum? . . . Ego vocavi, servabo et pascam, et aliis excidentibus alios subrogabo, ita ut, si nati non fuerint, faciam illos nasci, et quantiscumque fuerit impulsibus, paupercula hæc concussa Religio salva semper meo munere permanebit." *Leg. of St. Bonaventure*.

tual he had a great liking for the Observance, and a profound veneration for St. James della Marca who had foretold his elevation to the Papal dignity, and for several other Fathers of the Observance who have since been canonised. Nevertheless he thought it would be for the general good of the Order to suppress the Bull of Eugenius IV., and to bring about the union without any attempt to reform the Conventuals. Sixtus IV. assembled the Consistory of Cardinals, summoned Blessed Mark of Bologna, Vicar General of the Cismontane Observance, made known to him his intention of bringing about the fusion, and requested him to explain any reasons he might have against the execution of this project. The holy man who was far from expecting such a proposition, was deeply afflicted by it, he gave his reasons calmly and firmly, and represented that this project would interfere with the observance of the Rule among his religious, unless the Conventuals who were to be united to them were reformed. Then seeing that he could not succeed in converting the august assembly to his views, he cast his book of Rules at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, and raising his hands and eyes to heaven cried out while shedding floods of tears, "O Seraphic Father do thou thyself now defend thy Rule since such a wretch as I am unable to defend it." Having said this he left the assembly, sobbing and weeping. The inspired prayer, the tears of the venerable Religious were more efficacious than his words. The Consistory separated without coming to any decision, and the Pope soon giving up the project showed himself more and more favourable to the Observance.

Thus the Bull of Eugenius IV., *Ut Sacra Ordinis Minorum*, which preserved to the Observance its separate existence without interfering with the substantial unity of the order, remained in force till Leo X. published his

celebrated constitution, *Ite et vos in vineam meam*, (1517) of which we are about to speak. This Pontifical ordinance put the last seal upon the work of reform which had been carried out in the Order during the preceding centuries.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Order of Friars Minor was almost entirely reformed. The Friars of the Observance constituted its most important portion on account of their number, of their fidelity to the Rule, the strictness of their discipline, the favour with which they were looked upon by princes and nations, and the services they rendered to the Church. This is not surprising when we consider the great number of Saints and Blessed to whom the Observance gave birth during a century or thereabouts. Men for the most part remarkable for learning and holiness, whom the Church has since canonised were at its head.<sup>33</sup>

The great Family of Friars Minor was then composed of several branches. First the Cismontane and Ultramontane Friars of the Observance, who were governed by Vicars General, these were the most numerous, and possessed one thousand three hundred convents in forty-eight Provinces, which means about *thirty thousand* religious. All the Saints and Blessed who appeared in the Order in the fifteenth century belong to this branch.

<sup>33</sup> St. Bernardine of Siena governed the Observance in Italy for six years, first as Commissary General, then as Vicar General, St. John Capistran ruled over it for thirteen years, at one time as Commissary Apostolic of the entire Family of the Observance, and upon two occasions as Vicar General of the Cismontane Observance. Blessed Mark of Bologna was thrice Vicar General, and four times did Blessed Angelo of Chivasso fill the same office. To these names we must add that of Blessed Gabriel Maria, specially honoured by the Annonciades, who was twice Vicar General, and once Commissary General of the Ultramontane Franciscans of the Observance.

Secondly, the Observance of the Community, whose convents were subject to the immediate authority of Conventual Superiors, these formed at that time a very considerable proportion. Thirdly, four congregations of a special kind of reform, who were not very numerous, the Clarennins, the Colettins, the Amedéens, and the Discalced of Spain and Portugal.<sup>34</sup> Fourthly, the Conventuals or non-reformed, who only constituted a sixth part of the Order. Despite their differences these various branches of the Friars Minor still formed one body subject to the Minister General, the successor of St. Francis.

In the year 1517, Leo X. conceived the project of restoring to complete unity the Order of Friars Minor

<sup>34</sup> From the beginning of the Order to the time of Leo X. (1517) many different reforms appeared, but these were unimportant as some were suppressed and others incorporated with the Observance by Leo X. We shall just say a few words about those which were best known.—The *Cæsarians*, disciples of Blessed Cæsarius of Spires, were zelators of the Rule in the time of Brother Elias, but did not separate themselves from the body of the Order; they disappeared under Blessed John of Parma who laboured to root out the abuses introduced by Brother Elias.—The *Celestins*, thus called after Pope Celestin V., who approved them in 1294; they were suppressed by Boniface VIII.—The *Clarennins*, established in 1302 by Blessed Angelo of Cingoli who had been a Celestin. These were approved by Sixtus IV., and took their name from the river Clarenne in Umbria near to which their first convent was founded; in 1517 they were incorporated with the Observance.—The *Colettins*, founded by St. Colette in 1412 and incorporated with the Observance in 1517. These religious were not numerous. They existed only in France and had hardly any convents except in the provinces of France, Touraine and St. Bonaventure.—The *Amedéens*, founded in Lombardy about 1460 by Blessed Amedeus of Sylva, a rich Portuguese nobleman, brother to Blessed Beatrice of Sylva, foundress of the Conceptionists.—The *Discalced of Spain*, also called *Brothers of the Cowl* or *Holy Gospel*, who were established about the year 1500 by Blessed John of Guadeloupe. This holy reformer founded in Spain the Custodia of the Holy Gospel and in Portugal that of our Lady of Pity.



and bringing about the fusion of the various branches, by doing away with all differences. With this intention, he called all the Friars Minor to Rome to a special General Chapter, and proposed to them the fusion. The Fathers of the Observance acceded to the wish of the Sovereign Pontiff, but requested permission to observe the Rule strictly and without any dispensation; they were ready to make any sacrifice except that of their Rules. As to the Conventuals they declared they did not wish for the union if it imposed upon them the necessity of renouncing the dispensations they had received from the Holy See.<sup>35</sup>

Leo X. saw that it would be very difficult to unite into one Family, leading the same kind of life, the minority who availed themselves of dispensations and the immense majority who faithfully adhered to the Rule. He therefore resolved to incorporate with the Observance all those who already lived or desired to live according to the Rule, and to reserve in future to this most important portion of the Order the exclusive right of nominating the Minister General, successor of St. Francis. As to the small number of those who made use of dispensations, called Conventuals, the Sovereign Pontiff proposed to make them a distinct congregation with power to name a Superior General who should be subject to the supreme Head of the Order, elected by the Fathers of the Observance and always taken from their ranks. With this

<sup>35</sup> Father Fodéré points out that Leo X. only consulted the Observance of the Family, the Observance of the Community and the Conventuals. He did not ask the opinion of the other congregations because they were so unimportant. "As to the Amédéens, the Clarennins, the Colettins and Capuchins, the Pope," he says, "did not deign to ask them as they had neither the assurance nor the power to resist." *Historical Narrative*. p. 214.

intention Leo X. published the celebrated Constitution *Ite et vos in vineam meam*, called the *Bull of Union*, because it decrees the union of all the reformed into a single body. The Pope indeed by this Bull incorporated with the Observance all special reforms and all those who kept or desired to keep the Rule without dispensations or mitigations. He abolished the different denominations of Clarennins, Colettins, etc., and ordained that the members of this great reform should adhere to the simple name of *Friars Minor of St. Francis* or *Friars of the Regular Observance*,<sup>86</sup> which had already been given to them to distinguish them from the non-reformed or Conventuals. The Pope decreed in this same Bull that the body of the Order being reformed, the Head should in future be chosen from amongst them, *ne caput suis membris difforme appareat*.<sup>87</sup>

The Minister General was no longer to be appointed for life but only for six years, and the Provincial Ministers for three years. The Friars of the Observance were then commanded to proceed to the election of the Minister General, successor of Saint Francis, who was to bear like his predecessors the title of *Minister General of the entire Order of Friars Minor*, with the use of the ancient seal of the Order.

Father Christopher of Forli, formerly Vicar General of the Cismontane family of the Observance, was elected Minister General, and Blessed Gabriel Maria, Vicar Gen-

<sup>86</sup> "Fratres Minores Sancti Francisci Regularis Observantiæ vel simul vel disjunctive nuncupentur." Bull *Ite et vos in vineam meam*. The present Observance then descends directly from those reformed who were incorporated by Leo X. and consequently from the members of the Observance who were governed by Vicars General, from those who were governed by Conventual Superiors and from all the other reformed Friars.

<sup>87</sup> Bull *Ite et vos in vineam meam*, published by Leo X. in 1517.

eral of the Ultramontane Observance, was chosen Commissary General of the Ultramontane branch. On this occasion the Pope only confirmed the right which the Observance and other reformed Friars had already in virtue of their Rule, to take part in the election of the Supreme Head of the Order, but he withdrew this privilege from the Conventuals who did not faithfully observe the rule. The Pope also wished the Minister General to be in future chosen from among the Fathers of the Observance alone, so that it should no longer be possible for the branch which was almost entirely reformed to be governed by a non-reformed minister *ne caput suis membris difforme appareat*.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> It is important to notice that the Pope did not take away from the Conventuals the right of electing the Minister General of the Order, so as to transfer it to the Observance, as though these last had not already possessed it. According to the Rule, both had a voice in the election, and it was this latter right only that Leo X. withheld from the Conventuals, because they did not keep the Rule intact, he in fact only *preserved* this same right to the Observance and the other reformed members who by their numbers and fidelity to the Rule constituted the most important part of the Order. Up to this time though divided into two branches, the Friars of the Observance and the Conventuals only formed one body, whose Superior took the title of *Minister General of the entire Order of Friars Minor*, to shew that his authority extended over all sections of the Order. The right of electing this head belonged according to the Rule to all the members of the Order, and could not be confined to the Conventuals who were only a small portion thereof which continued to diminish as the Reform spread. It would, moreover, have been abnormal and contrary to the spirit and letter of the Rule, if this right had been accorded to those who no longer kept the Rule in its strictness, and refused to its true followers. The Observance, then, and the other reformed Friars were in theory perfectly entitled to take part in the election of the Minister General both actively and passively. Those of the Observance who were subject to the Conventuals never ceased to exercise this right, while those who were governed by the Vicars General, had latterly, especially, inasmuch as they were less under the authority of the Minister General, abstained from interfering in the election of the supreme head

Leo X., published immediately afterwards the Bull *Omnipotens* called *De Concordia*, in which he again declared that the Minister General of the whole Order, who according to the Rule had authority over all the members, should be elected by the Observance only, and out of their own number. He ordered that the Conventuals who held dispensations as well as property and money, should elect their own Superior with the title of "Master General of the Conventual Friars Minor," and subject to confirmation by the Minister General of the whole Order.<sup>39</sup> He finally declared that the Observance should have precedence everywhere over the Conventuals, and that they might receive into their number such of the latter as desired to return to the perfect observance of the Rule.

After this great act of Leo X., the Friars Minor of the Observance spread still more rapidly while on the other hand the Conventuals gradually diminished. A great

of the Order. Still they had the right, and indeed made use of it in the case of the election of William of Casale and Antony Rusconi. It may be said, however, that the election of the General according to the Rules only belongs to the Ministers and the Custodes, and that before Leo X. the Observance had Vicars only. It is quite true indeed that the Provincials of the Observance had merely the title of Vicars, but according to the declaration of Julius II. these Vicars were *really Ministers*. Passively speaking, the Friars of the Observance could equally participate in the general government of the Order. Their characteristic of being true followers of the Rule could not be a cause of incapacity or exclusion. In fact in 1430, St. John Capistran shared in the general government, and in 1442 Blessed Albert of Sartiano was placed at the head of the entire Order. Leo X. then, only confirmed in their favour, a right which the Rule already gave to the Observance and the other Reformed members.

<sup>39</sup> Later the Master General of the Conventuals was dispensed from asking for this confirmation; the Friars of the Observance and the Conventuals then formed two entirely distinct and independent bodies. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Master General took the title of Minister General of the Conventuals.



number of religious and even entire Provinces returned to the primitive strictness of the Rule. In Spain, for instance, in Portugal, Denmark, England and other countries all the Conventuals were reformed and by degrees passed over to the Observance. In France the five Provinces of the Order which then existed and whose origin dated back to the time of St. Francis were also reformed,<sup>40</sup> and three of them whose members had become too numerous, were obliged to be divided.

As we have seen the Friars Minor of the Observance did not confine themselves to founding new houses. They reformed the old communities and Provinces of the Order by restoring them to the primitive spirit of St. Francis. The Observance was not a particular reform like some other branches which have been founded in the Order. It was a general reform, a regeneration of the *entire Order*. Of none other has the Church said, "That it had revived throughout the world the Order which was languishing and almost lifeless."<sup>41</sup> The Observance, then, was not an offshoot from the trunk of the Order, it was the trunk itself, deriving fresh life from its new and more abundant sap. This regeneration of the Order, begun about the middle of the fourteenth century, was continued by St. Bernardine of Siena and his disciples in the fifteenth century, and completed in 1517 by the act of Leo X.

In the ages following this great event, the Observance extended very rapidly, and many of its members, fired with the Seraphic spirit newly enkindled within its bosom, devoted themselves to a practice of perfection, as strict as any followed in the other branches of the Order.

<sup>40</sup> The Conventuals kept in France forty-eight convents out of which they formed the three Provinces of Burgundy, Provence and St. Roch.

<sup>41</sup> Bull *Ite et vos in vineam meam*.

The life led by St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, Blessed Thomas of Cori and their followers, seems almost beyond human endurance. The Observance, then, continued to serve the Church as we shall see, and give her apostles and Saints.

As we have before mentioned, the Seraphic spirit was re-enchanted, as it were, in the Observance in the sixteenth century. This exuberance of spiritual life led to the formation, at this period, of three new branches of a stricter observance and to the establishment of convents of the Recollects and Missionary Colleges in the succeeding centuries.

At the present day there are four distinct branches of the Observance, though forming but one Family and under one and the same head, *The Minister General of the entire Order of Friars Minor*. These branches are the Friars Minor of the Regular Observance, or Observance properly so called, of whom we have only spoken so far, the Discalced, the Recollects, and the Reformed.<sup>42</sup>

These three last branches of the Observance, which were founded in the sixteenth century with stricter rules, have been called reforms. The word *Reform*, applied to Religious Orders, can have two different meanings. It can signify the return of the members to the practice of the Rule—this necessarily implies a greater or less degree of falling off—such a reform is partial or general according as it extends to a portion or the whole of the members. For instance, the Observance in the fifteenth century

<sup>42</sup> These are the names given by the general Constitutions of the Order to the religious of the strictest Observance. Father John Capistran, ex-Provincial of the Reformed at Rome, says in his life of St. Benedict the Moor, p. 30: "The Reformed, as is well known, can and should be called by the generic name of Observance." Father Vanden Haute, a Belgian Recollect, gives the reason, "Non sunt nisi observantes strictius viventes."

caused a general reform and regeneration of the Order of Friars Minor. The Church has formally so declared it. "The Observance," says Leo X., "revived throughout the world the Order which was languishing and almost lifeless."

The word reform may be understood in another sense—it may signify a more rigorous and stricter mode of life than is exacted by the Rule, this kind of reform may be established in a Religious Order where the Rule is carefully observed. It is in this latter sense that the different branches of the Observance may be designated Reforms. The religious who in the sixteenth century founded a still stricter observance, did not aim at re-establishing the practice of the Rule among the entire body, for it was already faithfully followed. Innocent XI. indeed declared in his Constitution, *Sollicitudo pastoralis*, that the Family of the Observance never sought any mitigation or dispensation, but if there were any isolated or local cases of laxity, such as may be met with in the most fervent Orders, these slight abuses were carefully suppressed by the superiors.

The religious of the stricter Observance wished to inaugurate a more austere mode of life than is prescribed by the Rule, and to become still more deeply imbued with the spirit of their saintly Founder. This is clearly shown in the Statutes given by St. Peter of Alcantara to the Discalced Friars.<sup>43</sup> The first Bull given by Clement VII.

<sup>43</sup> In 1753 there was erected in the church of St. Peter in Rome a statue of St. Peter of Alcantara, bearing the following inscription: "*S. Petrus de Alcantara seraphica puritatis Regulæ instaurator*," this seems to imply that the Saint had restored to its pristine vigour the Rule which had been relaxed among the Friars Minor of the Observance. The Procurator General of the Order objected to this inscription as being opposed to the truth and the following was substituted for it. "*S. Petrus de Alcantara apostolicæ Patris sui sancti Francisci vitæ renovator*," which

to the Reform in Italy does not say that the Friars of the Observance had fallen away from the spirit of the Rule, but on the contrary mentions with what fidelity they practised it, yet there were some among them who desired to keep it with still greater rigour. These latter therefore follow a more *strict* Observance of the Rule, (*Strictioris Observantiæ*), while the Observance adheres to the *strict* and regular practice of the same Rule and to the ancient Constitutions of the Order.

It may be asked whether the sole desire of leading a more perfect life was a sufficient motive for endangering the unity of an Order wherein the Rule was fully observed, and, on the other hand, where each member in particular could follow the mode of life to which he felt drawn. It is true that there have always been and still are in the Observance a multitude of fervent religious who though not belonging to a branch of the stricter Observance lead a much more austere life than is required by the Rule. At the same time, it is certain that the practice of this more perfect life becomes easier in a community or in a small portion of the Order, when it is unanimously observed, and prescribed by particular statutes. It is for this reason that the members of the Observance have established in every Province convents of Recollection, and have founded in the Regular Observance Provinces of still stricter Observance.

The existence of these different branches is in nowise contrary to the Rule of the Friars Minor. St. Francis has established unity in his Order as regards the spirit and precepts of the Rule, and he leaves his children full liberty to embrace still more perfectly the evangelical life

means that the Saint was a perfect imitator of St. Francis and renewed in his own person the apostolic life of the Seraphic Patriarch. *Secoli serafici*, p. 262.



which is the true life of the Friars Minor. Finally we may say that if the Church has approved of the various branches and families which form the Order of Friars Minor, it is because she deems it advisable for the good of souls and the glory of God. Should the day come when she shall see fit to do away with these differences she will act with the same wisdom which characterises all her decisions.

The Friars of the Observance, the Reformed, the Discalced and the Recollects, form, as we have already said, but one body. Subject to the same Rule to which they adhere faithfully, without seeking the least mitigation, governed by the same General Constitutions, they have but one and the same head, who is chosen indiscriminately from one or the other of these branches, and exercises the same direct authority over them all. "They all form" said Benedict XIII., "*unum corpus Religionis ac Ordinis, sub uno eodemque capite et ministro generali.*"<sup>44</sup> These religious are merely distinguished by their own particular Statutes, and this only constitutes an *accidental* difference. "They are among themselves," says Benedict XIV. "*Realiter uniti et identificati, præter specialia Statuta.*"<sup>45</sup> Fr. Vanden Haute, a Recollect of the Belgian Province, sums up very clearly these Pontifical declarations, when he says: "*Discalceati, Recollecti et Reformati, non sunt nisi Observantes strictius viventes, et ab illis (Observantibus) ac inter se non distinguuntur nisi per accidentalia statuta et regimen subalternum.*"<sup>46</sup>

Although the difference between these four branches is purely accidental, the general Constitutions of the

<sup>44</sup> Bull *Pastoralis officii*. February the fourteenth, 1726.

<sup>45</sup> Bull *Laudabile*, August the second, 1745.

<sup>46</sup> *Brevis historia Ordinis Minorum*, p. 108.

Order ordain that this distinction should be maintained between them. The General Chapter held at Victoria in 1694, published the following decree, "Ex totius Capituli generalis compromisso, statuitur quod nullus religiosus sive active sive passive vocari aut intitulari possit, nisi conformiter ad statum, in quo reperitur, videlicet Observans si sit ex Observantibus, Reformatus si ex Reformatis, Discalceatus si ex Discalceatis, et si ex Recollectis Recollectus."<sup>47</sup>

The same General Chapter moreover declared that when mention is made of the Saints and Blessed of the Observance, it should be stated to what branch they belonged, and that they always belong to the one in which they died.

The second decree of the General Chapter of Victoria is thus worded, "Definitorium generale consulto et mature decernit, quod si servus Dei de quo agitur Causa beatificationis vel canonisationis apud Sanctam Sedem, aut qui a Summo Pontifice fuerit beatificatus aut canonisatus, sit ex Observantiâ et mortuus sit filius alicujus Provinciæ vel Custodiæ Observantis, tam in actis Causæ quam in picturis, sculpturis, laminis, libris, scripturis, elogiis et foliis, ac locis quibuscumque, exprimat quod est Ordinis Minorum Regularis Observantiæ. Si vero fuerit ex Reformatis, exprimat quod est Minorum Observantium Reformatorum; si autem fuerit ex Discalceatis vel Recollectis provinciis dicatur Ordinis Minorum Observantium Discalceatorum vel Recollectorum; quod etiam addatur si dicatur strictioris Observantiæ, ita ut nunquam particularis status in quo mortuus est sanctus, sive sit Regularis Observantiæ, sive Reformatorum, sive Discalceatorum, sive Recollectorum,

<sup>47</sup> *Chronologia historico-legalis*, T. ii., p. 236.

taceatur, aut status cum statu confundatur.”<sup>48</sup> At the request of the Procurator General of the Order and of the Procurators General of the Discalced Friars, of the Recollects, and of the Reformed, this statute was confirmed by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites dated the ninth of December, 1713.<sup>49</sup>

Finally on the twenty-seventh of March 1729, Benedict XIII. ordered at the General Chapter of Milan that this decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, regarding the names to be given to the Saints in the family of the Observance, should be obeyed throughout the Order.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless the religious of the body of the Observance *may and should claim indiscriminately* all the Saints of the great family to which they belong. The Reformed and the Recollects, for example, have the right to lay claim to the Saints and Blessed who belonged to the Observance and Discalced Friars, and *vice versa, but always with the condition that they shall give to each of these Saints the title of the particular*

<sup>48</sup> *Chronologia historico-legalis*, T. ii., pp. 261 and 262. Venice edition 1718.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, T. ii., p. 328, and T. iii., P. i., p. 550.

<sup>50</sup> Benedict XIII. charged Cardinal Lerçari, his secretary of state, to write on this subject to the Minister General who presided over the General Chapter of Milan. This letter, which is to be found in the *Chronologia historico-legalis* (T. ii., P. ii., p. 114) contains many instructions, the following included. (1) The Pope commands strict observance of the dispositions of the Bull, *Pastoralis officii* on the precedence of the Observance over the Reformed. (2) His Holiness wishes that in all writings, discourses, and on every occasion, the Saints, the Blessed, and the doctors of the Order who died before the Council of Constance, 1415, should be simply called Friars Minor, since before this epoch the Order was not divided. (This question, as is stated a little further on, had been already decided by two decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.) (3) The Saints and the Blessed of the Family of the Observance should always bear the name of the particular branch to which they belong (*ut supra*.) (4) The Saints and the Blessed, whether Conventuals or Capuchins, should bear the name of the Family in which they died and to which they consequently belong.

branch to which he belongs.<sup>51</sup> The religious of the family of the Observance have not the same claim to the Saints who belonged to the Conventuals and Capuchins, and *vice versâ*, for these three families of Friars Minor form in reality three distinct Orders quite independent of one another.

Some writers have held that the Discalced, the Recollects and the Reformed, only constituted one and the same branch. This is an erroneous opinion. We should rather be guided by the prescriptions of the general Rules of the Order. Besides, these three branches have neither the same origin nor the same Statutes.

From all this we must conclude that the religious of the four branches of the Observance are perfectly *distinct* one from another and *nevertheless are not separate*.

The Friars Minor of the Regular Observance, or Observance properly so called, form according to the Bulls of Leo X., *the trunk of the Order*. Their Procurator at the Vatican bears the title of *Procurator General of the Order*. They have in short precedence over the three other branches that sprang from them, as Benedict XIII. declares in his Bull, "*Pastoralis Officii*," of the fourteenth of February, 1726.

This Pontiff commands the Reformed to yield precedence to the Observance (as is done by the Discalced and Recollects,) "*in processionibus aliisque publicis actibus, et functionibus quibuscumque, nulla habita ratione majoris vel minoris antiquitatis conventuum.*"<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> It should indeed be remembered that the religious of the Observance all make use of the same Breviary, and venerate with the same title and ritual all the Saints belonging to their Family, whatever be the particular branch to which they belonged.

<sup>52</sup> This Bull is given by Ferraris, (*Verb Præcedentia*) and by the *Chronologia historico-legalis* (T. iii., P. ii., p. 69). The Observance always has precedence, even when its convents are more recently founded.



The Discalced, the Recollects and the Reformed are on account of their union with the Observance, entitled to the privileges, precedences and prerogatives granted by Leo X. and the other Sovereign Pontiffs to the members of that body. Benedict XIV., in the Brief *Laudabile*, before cited, declares that the religious of the strictest Observance enjoy: "*eisdem gratiis et prerogativis quibus gaudent Observantes ut pote eisdem uniti et identificati.*" Urban VIII. had already declared that the Discalced, belonging to the same family as the Regular Observance, were entitled to the same precedence.<sup>53</sup>

#### *The Discalced Friars of the Observance.*

This branch of the Observance had as its promoter Blessed John of Guadeloupe, a disciple of Blessed John of Puebla. The latter was the eldest son of Alfonso of Sotomayor, Count of Belalcazar, who was allied to the

<sup>53</sup> Bull of Urban VIII., *Ex incumbentis*, of January the ninth, 1630 which recites the decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of the tenth and twenty-second of December, 1619. At Rome, in the great procession of Corpus Christi, the Reformed take rank among the Fathers of the Observance and consequently precede the Conventuals and Capuchins. But when Father Joseph Maria of Alexandria was General, the pontifical Master of Ceremonies placed the Reformed after the Capuchins on account of their later origin. The Reformed appealed to the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Father Antonio of Rignano, then Secretary General of the Order, who died Bishop of Potenza, was their advocate before the Sacred Congregation. He was obliged to admit that, qua Reformed, they were posterior to the Capuchins, but he pointed out that they had never ceased to belong to the family of the Observance and that, qua Observance, they were entitled to participate in all the privileges of that religious family and consequently had precedence over the Capuchins. The Sacred Congregation accepted this reason and granted the request of the Reformed.

royal family of Spain. He went to Rome in 1480, received the habit of the Observance from the hands of Sixtus IV. and then spent some years in the convent of the *Carceri* which belonged to the Observance of Italy. Having returned to Spain in 1490, he founded the convent of our Lady of the Angels on the heights of Sierra Morena and established the austere Custodia of the Holy Angels. The famous Cardinal Quignones came here to receive the habit from Blessed John of Puebla taking the name of Francis of the Angels, and after being successively Custos and Provincial, he was appointed Minister General of the Order. Blessed John of Puebla was not however the founder of the Discalced Friars, for the Custody of the Holy Angels which he placed under the authority of the Vicar General of the Ultramontane Observance, never ceased to belong to the Regular Observance. The real founders were St. John of Guadeloupe and St. Peter of Alcantara.

After the death of Blessed John of Puebla, which happened in the year 1497 at the convent of Belalcazar, Blessed John of Guadeloupe, one of his disciples, left the Custody of the Holy Angels about 1500, in order to found a new Custody of the Holy Gospel, quite separate from the Observance, and with more austere practices. His disciples were called Friars of the Holy Gospel, or Friars of the Hood, on account of the peculiar shape of their capuce, and Discalced, because at first they went barefooted and did not even wear sandals. This venerable Reformer founded the Custody of our Lady of Pity in Portugal, and died in the Lord, in 1506.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> We must remark that the Discalced branch was, from the first, distinct from the Observance, while the Recollects' and Reformed convents were originally only stricter monasteries belonging to the Observance.

In the year 1517 the Custody of the Holy Gospel, as well as that of our Lady of Pity, which then constituted the little Reform of the Discalced, was incorporated by Leo X. with the Regular Observance. In 1519 the Custody of the Holy Gospel, the cradle of the Discalced, was made a Province under the title of St. Gabriel, by Blessed Gabriel Maria, then Commissary General of the Ultramontane Observance. Blessed John of Prado who was martyred in Morocco, belonged to the Province of St. Gabriel. Notwithstanding this incorporation with the Observance, the disciples of Blessed John of Guadeloupe preserved the name of Discalced with their special statutes, and formed, within the Observance, the distinct branch of *Discalced Friars of the Observance*.

St. Peter of Alcantara who received the habit in the Province of St. Gabriel, the cradle of the Discalced, became its Provincial in 1538, and gave still more severe Rules than those of Blessed John of Guadeloupe. Four years later, 1542, he founded the Custody of La Rabida in Portugal. Then, wishing to establish a still stricter mode of life, he left the Province of St. Gabriel, to found, in 1555, the convent of Pedroso and others, which, about 1561, became the Province of St. Joseph. The disciples of St. Peter of Alcantara were called Discalced Alcantarins. Their austerity was greater than that of any other of the Reforms of the Seraphic Order. To the Province of St. Joseph belong St. Peter Baptist, St. Martin of the Ascension, St. Francis of St. Michael, some of the Japanese martyrs who were beatified in 1867, and Blessed Andrew Hibernon. This Province, moreover, in 1579, founded the new Province of St. John the Baptist which was rendered illustrious by St. Pascal Baylon. It also founded the mission and Province of the Philippine Islands which gave to Japan apostles and

martyrs, of whom many were canonized and others beatified. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Alcantarins established themselves in Naples. St. John Joseph of the Cross was the founder of the first Province formed there.

The Discalced Friars of St. Peter of Alcantara were later on incorporated with the Discalced disciples of Blessed John of Guadeloupe, and were known as Discalced or Alcantarins. They had as many as twenty Provinces, and went over to the New World, where they laboured with great zeal for the conversion of infidels. They have given to the Observance twenty-two Saints or Blessed whose office is said in the Order.

#### *Recollects of the Observance.*

In 1502, at a General Chapter of the Ultramontane Observance, held in Castile, it was decided that there should be certain Convents of Recollection in all the Spanish Provinces, for those members of the Observance who, like the newly founded Discalced Friars, wished to lead a more austere and contemplative life. In 1533, similar houses were established in France. Up to that time, these convents of Recollection belonged to the Observance and were not a distinct branch. The Recollects of France, relying on the Bulls of Clement VII. and Gregory XIII., given to the Reformed in Italy, established their first Custodia in 1590, others soon followed and in 1603 and 1612 were formed into Provinces. Thenceforward these religious became a distinct branch of the Observance.

The Recollects spread themselves in France, the Netherlands (1598) Westphalia, and Thuringia, but only



in the Ultramontane Family. In Spain, the convents of Recollection were never formed into Custodies or Provinces, but were always a part of the Province of the Observance, and never belonged to the branch of the Recollects.<sup>55</sup> In France, the Recollects were chaplains to the army and navy and they founded a celebrated mission in Canada. The eminent theologians, Boyvin, Henno, Sporer, Kasemberger and Herinx were Recollects.

*The Reformed Friars of the Observance.*

About 1518, the Minister General Francis Lychet ordered that in all the Italian and Cismontane Provinces houses of Recollection should be established for those religious

<sup>55</sup> It is important not to confound the convents of the Recollects with the houses of Recollection established in the Provinces of the Observance in France, Spain, Italy and elsewhere. Each of the Provinces of the Observance should have by rights two or three such houses for those who wish to lead a more austere and contemplative life. These religious do not on that account become Recollects, but always remain Friars of the Observance, as was explained in the General Chapter of Victoria in 1694. "It should be observed," said the Fathers of the Chapter, "that by *Recollect* the General Chapter means a religious of a Province of Recollects, and not a religious of a Province of the Observance, living in a convent of Recollection; for all such convents in the Provinces of the Observance, and their inmates belong to the special branch of the Observance." *Chronologia*, T. ii., p. 263. Thus St. Francis Solano and Blessed Salvador of Orta who lived in convents of Recollection in Spain were members of the Observance and never of the branch of Recollects, who indeed, as we have said, never had any Provinces in Spain. It is true, however, that Venerable Angelo of Paz, relying on the Bulls given by Clement VII. and Gregory XIII. to the Reformed in Italy, founded a Custodia of Recollects or rather of the Reformed in Catalonia which Gregory XIII. even raised to a Province in 1581, but he subsequently in 1583 revoked the Bull of erection and replaced the convents under the ordinary authority of the Provincials of the Observance. With the exception of this attempt of Venerable Angelo of Paz, there were never any Friars in Spain but those of the Observance and the Discalced.

who were anxious for a more austere life, as had already been done, in 1502, in the Ultramontane Family. The Minister General Francis of the Angels renewed the order, in 1526, and gave particular statutes to those religious who were called the Reformed (*Reformati*).<sup>56</sup> In 1532, Clement VII. published his Bull *In suprema*, which was the first given in their favour. In this Bull it is said, "Leo X. reunited in one body all the Friars Minor *who faithfully and simply observed the Rule of St. Francis*, and thenceforth their common name and distinctive title has been *Friars Minor of St. Francis, of the Regular Observance*. Now we have been informed that certain professed Friars of this Order, inspired by the Holy Ghost, desire to follow the Rule with greater rigour, we therefore order the Minister General and the Provincial to set apart four or five convents for those religious who wish for *this stricter observance* . . . The Provincial shall encourage these Reformed in their desire for greater poverty and more rigorous observance, who shall continue to wear the usual habit and capuce of the Order. These religious shall have the right to have a Custos subject to confirmation by the Provincial." Thus the Reformed were authorised to form Custodies, but they nevertheless remained members of their respective Provinces, and did not as yet form a distinct branch, so that these convents were only houses of Recollection for the Observance, *according to the original object of their foundation*.

In 1579, Gregory XIII., by his Bull *Cum illius vicem*, exempted the Custodes of the Reformed from the jurisdiction of their Provincials, and placed them under the direct authority of the Minister General of the Obser-

<sup>56</sup> Before Leo X. the name of Reformed or Friars Minor of the strict Observance was sometimes given to the Observance: at that time the Reformed properly so called, did not exist.

vance; he authorised them to hold Chapters and receive novices, and gave them the powers usually accorded to Provincials. Thenceforward the Reformed began to form a branch distinct from that of the Observance, though remaining members of the same family.<sup>57</sup> Finally, in 1639, Urban VIII. erected the twenty-five Custodies of the Reformed in Italy into Provinces and allowed them, in 1642, to draw up special Constitutions which slightly altered the shape of the habit.

In 1662, Venerable Bonaventure of Barcelona, a lay brother, founded within the Roman Province of the Reformed, a small but much more severe Reform which has its centre in the convent of St. Bonaventure on the Palatine. This little reform of Bonaventurins has given to the Order, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, Venerable Bonaventure of Barcelona, Venerable John Baptist du Tronchay who was born at Bellicut near Nozeroy in Franche Comté.

The branch of the Reformed, one of the largest sections of the Order, is spread over Italy and especially in the Cismontane Provinces, in Dalmatia, Poland, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Bavaria, etc. It serves many missions on both continents. It has given to the Order, St. Benedict of San Fradello, St. Pacificus of San Severino, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, Blessed Humilis of Bisignano and Blessed Charles of Sezze.

<sup>57</sup> The *Secoli Serafici*, and the *Manuale dei Frati Minori* maintain that the Reformed only became a distinct branch in 1639, when Urban VIII. raised their Custodies into Provinces. This opinion cannot now be held, because in 1807 the Sacred Congregation of Rites declared that St. Benedict of San Fradello, who died in 1589, belonged to the Reformed who, therefore, at that time, must have been a distinct branch. They, consequently, date from the Bull of Gregory XIII. (1579) investing their Custodes with the powers of Provincials, and making them directly subject to the Minister General.

The branch of the Observance strictly speaking, (Friars Minor of the Regular Observance), which extended over both the Ultramontane and Cismontane Families,<sup>58</sup> had already in the fifteenth century produced the twenty seven Saints or Blessed of whom we have spoken, and since that time, has added to its number St. Nicholas and his ten companions, martyred at Gorcum, St. Francis Blanco, martyred in Japan, St. Francis Solano, BB. Salvator of Orta, Nicholas Factor, Sebastian of Apparitio, Julian of St. Augustine, Thomas of Cori, and Apollinaris Franco, and five others of the Japanese martyrs who were beatified in 1867,<sup>59</sup> in all

<sup>58</sup> After the great suppression of the Religious Orders in France, Spain and Portugal, the Discalced and Recollects, who were principally established in those countries, lost most of their Provinces; the Observance then also suffered great losses. At the time of the last General Chapter which was held in Rome in 1862, the Observance had fifty-two Provinces or Custodies, and the Reformed forty-two, while the Discalced and Recollects had only six and five respectively. Fifty-two convents of nuns were still subject to the jurisdiction of the Minister General. The Recollects have now six Provinces. 1. The Belgian, one of the most flourishing of the Order, which has monasteries in the north of France, in England, Ireland and Scotland. 2. The Dutch, where owing to the spread of Protestantism, the faithful had no other priests but the Franciscans, who have since retained a great number of parishes. 3. The Irish. 4. That of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia, which has founded a mission in the United States. 5. That of the Holy Cross in Saxony, which, in 1858, founded a mission in North America. 6. This last mentioned mission, which contains fourteen convents or residences, has just been made a Province under the title of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*. The Discalced have also the apostolic Province of the Philippine Islands, one in Mexico founded by St. Peter Baptist, two in Brazil, and two in the Neapolitan Provinces.

<sup>59</sup> The mission of Japan belonged to the Discalced of Spain, yet some of its missionaries came from the Observance, as is still the case in many missions of the Order, where religious of the different branches of the Observance are found. These religious though working in a mission of another branch, do not become incorporated with it. When they leave,



fifty-one Saints or Blessed, who are publicly venerated. The Saints of the entire body of the Observance number *seventy-eight*.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Observance established *Convents of Recollection* in each of its Provinces for the religious who desired to lead a more austere and contemplative life. Blessed Thomas of Cori and Venerable Theophilus of Corte were the principal promoters of these communities in Italy. The Reformed of Italy and the Recollects of the Province of Saxony had similar establishments.

In the seventeenth century, two missionaries of the Observance, Father Antony Linas and Venerable Antony Margil founded Missionary Colleges in America. These are houses of retreat where the religious prepare themselves for the apostolic ministry by study, prayer, and penance, they give missions and retreats in the parishes, and preach the Gospel to such of the neighbouring people as are still heathens. These Colleges were approved by Innocent XI., Benedict XIII., and Pius VI., and rapidly increased in the New World. In 1720, some were established in Spain both by the Observance and the Discalced, and in our own times similar communities have been formed in Italy. During the sixteenth century and the time which followed, the Observance continued to increase, to produce, as we have said, wonderful fruits of holiness, and to labour for the Church and souls. Even in the fifteenth century the Friars Minor of the Observance had traversed the Atlantic, wending their way to the lands

they return to their own Province. Blessed Apollinaris Franco and the five other members of the Observance who were martyred in Japan, as well as St. Francis Blanco, the companion of St. Peter Baptist, worked in this mission of the Discalced without ever having ceased to belong to the Regular Observance.

recently discovered by the Spaniards and Portuguese, and had evangelized the Azores, the Canaries, Madeira, Cape Verde islands, Mozambique, etc. In the following century, they worked in the East Indies, China, the Philippine Islands and Japan, where twenty-four of them, together with thirty-four Tertiaries, received the palm of martyrdom. They, moreover, continued the work of their predecessors in Morocco and the older missions of the Order.

As soon as America was discovered, the Observance was the first to bear to it the light of the Gospel. Father John Perez of Marchena, Guardian of the Convent at Rabida, the friend and counsellor of Columbus, and his advocate with Queen Isabella, was the first to offer up the Divine Sacrifice in the New World. Another Franciscan, Father Bernard Cousin, belonging to one of the French Provinces of the Observance, was the first to water with his blood this land destined, later on, to produce such an abundant harvest. Subsequently, the Friars of the Observance went over in thousands to these vast regions and became its first missionaries and its first bishops. They fertilized these barbarous lands with their toil and often with their blood, dispelled the darkness of idolatry, raised temples to the true God, and in fact carried the blessings of Christian civilisation to the poor savages together with the light of faith. In half a century of apostolic labours in America the Franciscans baptized twenty millions of infidels, and founded five hundred convents which were divided into eighteen Provinces.

The most celebrated of these indefatigable apostles, were Father John Zumarraga, belonging to the Observance in the Province of the Conception in Spain and first Archbishop of Mexico. Brother Peter of Ghent, member of the Observance in the Province of Flanders, a simple

Friar, in fifty years of apostolate in Mexico laboured unceasingly and baptized countless infidels. Paul III. wished to raise this holy religious to the priesthood and thought of making him Archbishop of Mexico, but the apostolic Nuncio was unable to conquer his humility. We must not omit the name of Father Martin of Valencia, a Discalced Friar of the Province of Saint Gabriel, who, in ten years of apostolic labours, baptized more than a million of heathens, and earned the title of Apostle of Mexico. Half a century later, there appeared in America the most wonderful of its apostles, Saint Francis Solano, called the Apostle of the West Indies, the Thaumaturgus of the New World.<sup>60</sup> He renewed in the West Indies the wonders that Saint Francis Xavier had already worked in the East Indies.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Lesson VI. of the Office of the Saint.

<sup>61</sup> In the sixteenth century *the East or Great Indies* meant the south east part of Asia, and included, 1. India on this side the Ganges, since called Hindostan, and which now comprises two independent States, the English possessions of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, etc., (eight ninths of Hindostan belong to England,) the Portuguese possessions of Goa, etc., and the French possessions of Pondicherry, etc. 2. India beyond the Ganges, now called Indo-China, which is bounded on the north by the Chinese Empire, and comprises Burmah, Anam, Tonquin, Cochin-China, etc., the kingdom of Siam, certain English possessions and the French possessions, Saigou in Lower Cochin-China, etc. The other regions of Asia (now Russia in Asia, Turkey in Asia, Turkestan, Persia, China, Thibet, Japan, etc.,) did not form part of the East Indies. *By the West or Smaller Indies*, was meant America and the Antilles. To Spain belonged Columbia or the Spanish Main (New Grenada, Carthagen, Venezuela,) Peru, Chili, Paraguay, (Paraguay properly so called, Rio de la Plata and Tucuman,) Mexico or New Spain, etc. To Portugal, belonged Brazil. North America was chiefly occupied by the English, and Canada by the French. At present North and South America consist of numerous independent States.—The Franciscans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries travelled through the East Indies, on both sides of the Ganges, through Persia, China and Thibet, and everywhere, founded flourishing missions. BB. John of

When Luther first raised the standard of revolt against the Church in Europe, the Observance was the first to take up arms against him. It combated heresy in Germany, France, England, Holland and Denmark and a great many of its members had the happiness of shedding their blood for the Catholic faith. In the sixteenth century four hundred and fifty-five religious of the Observance were martyred by the Protestants, and out of this number nearly two hundred belonged to France. There are

Monte Corvino, Odoric of Pordenone, and other Franciscan missionaries reached these vast countries by way of Constantinople; the only one then known. In the fifteenth century Vasco de Gama found a quicker and safer means of getting to India: he rounded the Cape of Good Hope and after discovering the Azores, and Cape Verde, etc., on his way, he reached India by Hindostan. The Franciscans of the Observance followed close after him. They evangelized the recently discovered islands and, arriving in India, continued the missions already founded there and preached in the East Indies, China, the Philippine Islands, Japan, etc. When St. Francis Xavier reached India he was received by the celebrated Franciscan, John of Albuquerque, Archbishop of Goa. The Friars Minor of the Observance, who had already been there fifty years, had everywhere founded churches, and colleges for the education of youth. (See *Histoire des Missions franciscaines*, by P. Marcellin of Civezza, vol. iii.) The Franciscans of the Observance were then the first apostles both of the East and West Indies. "Primi religiosi," says P. Arthur du Montier, "qui Americam, Indiam, tum Orientalem, tum Occidentalem sunt ingressi, fuere Franciscani; postea Dominicani, deinde Jesuitæ. Quod ita certissimum est, ut id probare, ærem verberare putarem. . . . Fratres nostri Franciscani velut apum examina sese effundentes, amplissimas totius occidentalis Indiæ atque Americæ regiones et provincias perlustrarunt Reges, principes et commune vulgus Christo consecrarunt, templa et ecclesias extruxerunt, ad insigniores archiepiscopatus et episcopatus erecti sunt; parochorum officia fere ubique functi sunt. Quando vero Jesuitæ illus appulerunt apud nos diversati sunt, quos fratres nostri benigne ac carissime receperunt. . . ." We have also the testimony of Father Turselinus, a Jesuit, who says in his *Life of St. Francis Xavier*, Book II: "Nulli in tota India tunc erant religiosi præter eos quos dixi Franciscanos." Father Plato, also a Jesuit, says: "Primos omnium, qui tantam provinciam aggressi sunt, Franciscanos esse legimus."



besides very many others whose names and deeds have not been recorded by history. The most illustrious of these martyrs were St. Nicholas and his ten companions belonging to the convent of Gorcum in Holland.

The history of these numerous Franciscan Missions may be said to be one long martyrology.

The Friars Minor of the Observance are still the most numerous and important family in the Seraphic Order and that which has produced the greatest number of Saints. It has given to the Church twenty-nine Saints and forty-nine Blessed, and consequently seventy-eight servants of God who are proposed to public veneration, and a very great number of others whose Cause is being examined at Rome, or who have received the title of Blessed in consequence of the continuous devotion paid to them. The Observance at this present time possesses more than twenty-six thousand religious,<sup>62</sup> more than two thousand of its missionaries are scattered over the world.

In Europe the Franciscans of the Observance have missions in Constantinople, Epirus, Macedonia, Albania, Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Transylvania, Western Russia, Holland, England, Ireland and Scotland. In Asia they are established in Palestine where they have the guardianship of the Holy Places, in the Island of Cyprus, and in China where they have seven apostolic Vicariates. In Africa they are to be found in Upper and Lower Egypt, in Morocco and in Tripoli in Barbary. In

<sup>62</sup> At the General Chapter held at Rome in 1856 and presided over by Pius IX., a census of the Order was taken according to the statistics furnished by the Provincials. These showed twenty-one thousand religious, to whom should be added those belonging to twenty-one Provinces the statistics of which could not be obtained, and all those of Spain, and the Philippine Islands. Hence we may conclude that the number of Franciscans of the Observance exceeds twenty-six thousand.

America they have missions in the United States, California, Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, New Grenada, Peru, Chili, Bolivia, the Argentine Republic, and Brazil. In Oceanica they are engaged in evangelizing the Philippine Islands and the diocese of Sydney. In these different missions, which in many cases date back to the early days of the Order, there are at present twenty-six bishops and archbishops belonging to the same religious family.<sup>63</sup>

The Observance is still in possession of some of the oldest sanctuaries of the Order, St. Mary of the Angels, Mount Alvernia, the Holy Places in Palestine, the Convent of *Ara Cæli* in Rome, which, since the time of St. Bonaventure, has been the residence of the Minister General of the Order, the Convents of St. Damian, the *Carceri*, Greccio, Fonte Colombo, where St. Francis received the Rule of the Friars Minor, and many others, founded by the holy Patriarch. Father Dominic of Gubernatis, after having enumerated the most venerable Sanctuaries possessed by the Observance, adds, *Cæteraque fere omnia prima Ordinis Cænobia Franciscanæ paupertatis gloriosa insignia ab ipso Seraphico Patre Sociisque ejus vel fabricata vel habitata honore prægrandi, se obtinuisse gloriantur.* (T. ii. Lib. vi.)

The Minister General of the Observance has in the Papal Chapel the rank reserved to the head of the whole Franciscan family. He has the title of "Minister General of all the Order of Friars Minor of St. Francis," with the exclusive use of the ancient seal of the Order.<sup>64</sup> These privileges far from having ever been revoked, have

<sup>63</sup> Most of these missions are served by the Observance or the Reformed. The Discalced have the mission of the Philippine Islands, the Recollects have the missions in Holland, England, Scotland and the United States.

<sup>64</sup> Ferraris. Verb. *Sigillum*.

been expressly confirmed by Clement VII., Paul III., Sixtus V., Clement VIII., and Urban VIII.

We will conclude with the following words of Leo X. in his Bull *Omnipotens*, "Volumus et etiam statuimus quod inter eos talis ordo servetur; videlicet quod in processionibus, et funeralibus, et exequiis necnon in omnibus aliis actibus publicis, Fratres Conventuales Fratribus Observantiæ locum digniorem relinquere teneantur." In his Bull *Et si pro injuncta* of January the twentieth, 1521, the same Pope adds, "Minores Observantes antiquum semper locum teneant, quem Ordo Sancti Francisci tenere hactenus consuevit."<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Orbis Seraphicus*, T. ii. p. 176.

## PART III.

### *The Conventual Friars Minor.*

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Conventual Friars Minor were constituted a separate body, as we have already stated, with a Master General whose election had to be confirmed within three days by the Minister General of the whole Order of Friars Minor. At that time the Conventuals only formed about a sixth part of the Order. After this great act of Leo X., their numbers diminished considerably, as a great many from among them joined the Observance. Nevertheless this Family continued to exist and was very prosperous in Italy and Germany. The Conventuals, in spite of their dispensations from Franciscan poverty, are one of the holiest and most austere Orders and have rendered important services to the Church. From their ranks have come many men who were illustrious for holiness and learning, bishops, cardinals, and three popes, Sixtus IV., Sixtus V., and Clement XIV. Blessed Bonaventure of Potenza, who died in the last century, and St. Joseph of Cupertino, the greatest Saint of the seventeenth century, belong to the Conventuals. This Order is now engaged in laying before the Holy See the Cause of many of its members, the Venerable Antonio Lucci, Bishop of Bovino, Angelo Antonio Sandreani, Antonio Fasani, Raphael Chylinski, and Domenico Girardelli.



The Conventuals have the immense privilege of guarding the glorious tomb of our holy Father St. Francis, and that of St. Antony of Padua, and to them is entrusted the mission of supplying the Basilica of St. Peter and the holy sanctuary of Loreto with penitentiaries for every language. These religious number at this time about three thousand; they serve two great missions, one in Moldavia (Roumania) and the other at Constantinople. The mission of Moldavia, one of the oldest in the Order, has twenty-six parishes in which fifty missionaries are employed.

About the middle of the fourteenth century the Order of Friars Minor was divided, as we have said, into two distinct branches, the Friars of the Observance and the Conventuals, who nevertheless formed but one body under one head. This division was recognised and confirmed by the Council of Constance in 1415. Hence it follows that all the Doctors, Saints and Blessed who have arisen in the Order since the Council of Constance must belong to the branch in which they died. Those, on the contrary, who died before that Council, should neither be called Friars of the Observance nor Conventuals, but simply Friars Minor, as has been laid down by several decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The Order, it is true, began to be divided long before the year 1415, but it was only then, at the Council of Constance, that the Church approved and consecrated the division of the Franciscan family into two distinct branches, and confirmed the title of Friars of the Observance to those who followed the Rule without dispensation or mitigation.

During the process of Beatification of Blessed Andrew of Conti who died in 1302, this servant of God was given the title of Conventual, but the Sacred Congregation of

Rites decreed on the twenty-fifth of September, 1723, that the term Conventual should be suppressed, and this decision was renewed on the eleventh of December of the same year.

A little later, on a similar occasion, the term Conventual was applied to Blessed Andrew of Spello, who died in 1254, and that of Tertiary of the Order of Conventuals to Blessed Michelina whose Cause was being examined at the same time. The Sacred Congregation of Rites commanded these titles to be suppressed and on the twenty-sixth of February, 1737, published a new decree which was thus worded: "In decretis præsentis Causæ, et aliorum utriusque sexûs servorum Dei tertiariorum S. Francisci, apponatur titulus: *Tertiarii Sancti Francisci*. In reliquis vero decretis servorum Dei Ordinis Minorum, qui decesserunt ante Concilium Constantiense, servantur resolutiones S. Congregationis editæ in Causâ Anagninâ B. Andreae de Comitibus, sub die 25 Septembris et 11 Decembris 1723."<sup>1</sup>

Cardinal Lercari, Secretary of State to Benedict XIII., on the twenty-seventh of March, 1729, wrote to the Minister General of the Observance who was to preside over the General Chapter at Milan, "His Holiness wishes you to make known to your religious that both in writings and in print, the Saints, Blessed, and Doctors of the Order who died before the Council of Constance, are only to be called Friars Minor, as before that Council the Order had not yet been divided."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Chronologia historico-legalis*, T. iii., P. ii., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem* p. 114. It cannot therefore be said that the Conventuals are older than the Friars of the Observance, nor that the latter take their origin from the former, since before the division of the Order, sanctioned in 1415 by the Council of Constance, there were neither Friars of the Observance nor Conventuals, but only Friars Minor. This results from the decrees of the Holy See, above quoted.

## PART IV.

### *The Capuchin Friars Minor.*

AT the beginning of the sixteenth century the Friars Minor were, as we have said, divided into two families. The Friars Minor of the Observance who followed the Rule without dispensation under the authority of the Minister General of the entire Order, these constituted the largest and most important portion, and the Conventual Friars Minor who made use of dispensations and were governed by a Master General. About the year 1528 there arose in the Order a third family of Friars Minor known at first as Hermits of St. Francis, and later as Capuchins, on account of the shape of their capuce which was both longer and larger. They first appeared in the Marches, and their founder was Father Matthew Baschi who some years later returned to the Observance, in which, in 1552, he died in the odour of sanctity. These religious desired to lead a hermit's life while at the same time faithfully observing the Rule of St. Francis. This favour was granted them by Clement VII. in his Brief *Zelus Religionis* of July third 1528, in which he says, "Vobis desiderantibus pro animarum vestrarum salute ac gloria Dei, *eremiticam vitam ducere*, et quantum humana potest fragilitas Regulam B. Francisci observare . . . ." supplicationibus vestris inclinati, auctoritate apostolica ut *habitum cum caputio quadrato gestare, et barbam deferre*

*et ad eremetica loca quæcumque vos conferret habitare. . .*" Clement VII. placed this new-born congregation under the authority of the Master General of the Conventuals.

The Capuchins were again approved by Paul III., in the Brief *Exponi Nobis* of August twenty-fifth, 1536. That Pontiff granted them permission to name a Vicar General who should be confirmed by the Master General of the Conventuals. On the twenty-ninth April, 1537, the same Pope in the Brief *Cum Sicut* renewed to the Capuchins permission to wear a square capuce, to lead hermits' lives, to let their beards grow according to the custom of hermits, and granted them the privileges of the hermits of Camaldoli.

This new family of St. Francis had, ere long, many difficulties to encounter. Some of its greatest trials, indeed, came from certain of the members themselves, and notably from two of the Vicars General, Louis of Fossombrone, and Bernardine Ochín. God allowed this in order to show more clearly the divine origin of the work, as its subsequent history has abundantly proved, for those religious who remained faithful to the spirit and Rule of St. Francis were to participate largely in the blessings reserved by the Holy Patriarch for his true sons.

The Constitutions which the Capuchins adopted prevented their hearing the confessions of seculars, and this was confirmed by Gregory XIV. in 1591. Clement XII., however, in 1735, allowed their General to nominate certain confessors for seculars. These religious remained for about a century under the authority of the Vicars General who depended on the Master General of the Conventuals. In 1619 Pope Paul V. allowed them to name their own General, and from that time the Capuchins formed a third independent branch of the Order.

The Bulls of Paul III. approving the Capuchins, for-



bade them to extend beyond Italy. In 1574, Gregory XIII. allowed them to go to France, where their works form one of the noblest pages of their history. Protestantism had ravaged this beautiful country, the faithful clergy had suffered a period of bloody persecution (1560-1574), the Friars Minor of the Observance, obnoxious to the Calvinists on account of their zeal in defending the Faith, had seen their convents devastated and ruined, while two hundred of their number had already gained the martyr's crown. The Capuchins bore invaluable aid to their brethren and to all French Catholics. They worked with indefatigable zeal for the conversion of heretics, of whom they brought many back to the Church, as much by their saintly lives as by learned controversy. Fourteen from among them were poisoned by the heretics at Calais, in 1589. Fr. Peter Besson, of Dreux, was put to death near Orleans in 1589 out of hatred to the Faith. In 1629, two others, Fr. Augustin of Geneva and Fr. Jerome of Condrien suffered glorious martyrdom at Privas. The Capuchins possessed from the first in France, men remarkable for their learning, their holiness, and their apostolic labours, such as Father Angelus de Joyeuse, Father Athanasius Moli, Father Joseph le Clerc of Tremblay, the venerable Honorè of Paris, Cherubin of Maurienne, and many others. They also distinguished themselves in France by their zeal in assisting the victims of the plague, whereby many of them bravely exposed their own lives.

As soon as the Popes allowed the Capuchins to establish themselves outside Italy they increased rapidly among other Christian and even infidel nations, working everywhere with unbounded zeal to extend the kingdom of God. St. Lawrence of Brindisi, a true apostle, travelled through Italy, Germany, and many other countries of

Europe, preaching the faith, working miracles and converting numbers of sinners, Lutherans and Jews. He was held in esteem by princes and people, and was sent on important missions to the most powerful sovereigns of Europe. He preached a crusade against the Turks and appeared at the head of the Christian army, crucifix in hand, encouraging the crusaders and promising them victory in God's name. As he foretold, the enemies of Christianity, seized with terror, took to flight.

St. Joseph of Leonissa appeared at Constantinople, and there whilst undergoing a cruel martyrdom was miraculously delivered by God, Who commanded him to convert Italy. St. Fidelis was sent to Switzerland by the Propaganda to combat Calvin's heresy, and reclaimed very many heretics, though at the price of great toil which was finally crowned by a glorious martyrdom. The Capuchins had thus the glory of giving to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda its first martyr. Blessed Angelo of Acri evangelized Calabria with the same successful results that attended St. Leonard of Port Maurice of the Observance, in the rest of Italy. The great St. Felix of Cantalice, the wonder of Rome for forty years, is well known, as are also BB. Crispin of Viterbo, Bernard of Corleone, VV. Ignatius of Laconi, Andrew of Burgo, Felix of Nicosia, and many other worthy imitators of St. Felix.

During the seventeenth century the Capuchin missionaries spread over the various provinces of Turkey in Europe, the ports of the Levant, Syria, Lebanon, Persia, Georgia, Ethiopia, Tunis, Congo, and penetrated into America, and everywhere these noble sons of St. Francis proved themselves worthy of their high apostolic vocation. This third family of Friars Minor was only the natural outcome of the new development of

the seraphic spirit which, as we have seen, showed itself in the beginning of the sixteenth century in the midst of the Observance. Though this new family has always been much less numerous than the Observance, and its sphere of action less extensive,<sup>1</sup> it is one of the Religious Orders that have done the most for the Church and souls.

The Capuchins have given ten Saints to the Seraphic Order, namely, St. Felix of Cantalice, St. Fidelis, St. Joseph of Leonissa, St. Seraphin of Montegrano, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, BB. Benedict of Urbino, Bernard of Corleone, Bernard of Offida, Angelo of Acri, Crispin of Viterbo, while they have many other servants of God whose Cause is now being examined at Rome. The Capuchin Friars Minor actually number about nine thousand.<sup>2</sup> In Europe they have missions in Switzerland, Constantinople, Cephallonia and Philippopolis. In Asia we find them in Candia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Trebizond, Smyrna, Agra, Patna in the Indies and Aden in Arabia. In Africa they have missions at Tunis, Gallas and the Seychelle islands. In America they are established in

<sup>1</sup> The family of Capuchins was an offshoot of the Observance, as Innocent XI. declares in his Bull *Nuper* of the sixteenth of January 1679: "*Præcedentiam deberi Fratribus Observantibus Minorum, ex quo Observantes sint priores in ordine qualitatis et approbationis apostolicæ, et Capuccini, (licet priores in fundatione per quatuor annos in eodem loco Ampuriensi), sunt tamen filiales ex eadem Religione Observantium, et longe posteriores in approbatione apostolica, quo in casu non intrat bulla Gregoriana de anterioritate conventus in eodem loco.*" *Chron. hist. leg.* T. p. 162. *Orbis Ser.* T. iv. p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> The Statistics, which we have just given of each of the three families of Friars Minor, were compiled twenty years ago; the figures then shown should probably be slightly diminished on account of the subsequent suppression of Religious Orders in Italy and Prussia. We must however observe that the Provinces of the Order of St. Francis which had been suppressed, have been re-constituted, and most of them have re-opened their novitiates.

Brazil, Chili, Araucania, Venezuela, Guatemala and Ecuador. According to the statistics published at their General Chapter, in 1853, the Capuchins have four hundred and thirty-five religious in these different missions. The family of the Capuchins may be styled a reform in the sense that they inaugurated a special and particularly severe rule of life. Their object, as the Bulls approving the Capuchins show, was to lead hermits' lives and yet strictly observe the Rule of St. Francis. They obtained permission from the Holy See to wear their beards, alter the shape of the capuce and live in hermitages. (Bull *Zelus religionis*.) Their first Constitutions, composed in 1529, allowed them to say one Mass only a day in each convent, to have only two chalices, and ordered them to take the discipline daily, they were also forbidden to establish themselves in towns, to shave their tonsures, to beg meat, eggs, cheese, etc. (Vanden Haute, *Brevis Historia Ordinis Minorum*.) They were specially forbidden to hear the confessions of seculars. Such was the original life of this new branch of the Order of St. Francis. Their's was a reform analogous to that of St. Jerome Lanza or Blessed John of Guadeloupe. This kind of life, which was introduced by Father Matthew Baschi, had many attractions for certain souls, and the future quickly proved that God destined this new family to bear the Church fresh and powerful aid.

But it was not a reform in the sense that any relaxation or deviation from the Rule had crept in on the part of the Observance, as they had never accepted any dispensations in mitigation of the Rule, as Innocent XI. declares in his Constitution *Sollicitudo Pastoris*.<sup>3</sup> If

<sup>3</sup> When, after the Bull of Leo X., many of the Conventuals joined the Observance, the Rule was somewhat relaxed in certain convents, but this was only *local* and never affected the main body of the Observance,



indeed it had been impossible for the Friars of the Observance to keep the Rule and attain to holiness, Father Matthew Baschi would never have left the Capuchins, whom he himself established, to return to the Observance in whose ranks he died after performing many miracles. The Observance, in the sixteenth century, at the very time when the Capuchins were increasing, as well as later, adhered most strictly to the Rule, while some of them indeed, such as the Discalced, the Reformed, and the Recollects, even added voluntary practices of extreme severity. Moreover, as the tree is known by its fruits, it is sufficient to call to mind what has already been said of the great labours of the Observance in the sixteenth century in the East Indies, the New World, the Philippine Islands, Japan, etc., their struggles with Protestantism, their countless martyrs, and the seventy-eight Saints or Blessed they have given to the Order, of whom fifty-one lived during the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries. The Friars of the Observance, indeed, have always been remarkable for holy and apostolic lives, the result of a faithful adherence to the spirit and Rule of St. Francis.

There was formerly much discussion about the shape of the habit worn by St. Francis. The Holy See has since expressly forbidden all controversy of the kind and allows no one to assert that any particular form of habit was really the one St. Francis wore: "*Inscriptiones omnes imaginum Sancti Francisci, et Sancti Antonii de Paduâ in quibus dicitur formam habitûs quâ depincti sunt*

whose superiors later stamped out the evil. These partial encroachments on the Rule were, however, one of the causes that led to the Capuchins forming a separate branch. But whatever occasioned this separation, God allowed it, so as to give the Church the support of a new and powerful army.

*esse eamdem quâ ipsi usi fuerunt* vel in quibus asseritur in hoc vel in illo Ordine Sancti Francisci esse veram, legitimam et non interruptam ejusdem Sancti Patris in filios successionem prohibentur." Decree of twentieth of December, 1663. "Libri omnes impressi, et qui inconsultâ sacrâ Congregatione imprimuntur, tractantes controversiam de verâ et non interruptâ successione filiorum Sancti Francisci, et *de verâ formâ caputii ejusdem*, prohibentur." Alexander VII., June. the twentieth, 1658.

The wisdom of this decision of the Church is increased by the difficulty of solving the point. St. Francis in the Rule merely indicates the parts of the habit of the Friars Minor, and recommends the poorest material for it, he mentions no special colour, nor shape, so that, the Rule being silent on these points, there was from the very first the same difference of opinion as still exists among the different branches of the Order. Originally the size of the capuce varied a little, and while some had it sewn to the habit, others wore it loose, as, for instance, the disobedient friar whom St. Francis ordered to take it off and put it in the fire. "*Jussit ablatum Fratri caputium in medio flammarum projici. . . . cumque per moram caputium fuisset in medio ignis, præcepit ipsum flammis detrahi reddique Fratri humiliter pœnitenti.*"<sup>4</sup> The habits which St. Francis himself wore were not all quite the same. For example, that which he wore when he received the Stigmata, and which is preserved by the Father of the Observance at Florence, has a very short capuce while in others the shape is slightly different.

From this we should conclude that the real habit of St. Francis is simply that laid down in his Rule, and as all Friars Minor of every branch, notwithstanding any

<sup>4</sup> *Legend of St. Bonaventure.*

other differences, conform to the Rule in this point, they all wear the real habit of St. Francis.

The Superiors of each of the three branches, for the sake of uniformity among their own religious, decided certain points of detail, as to which the Rule was silent, and in this they were within their right. And if certain accidental differences of shape exist in the habits of the three families of Friars Minor, it should be remembered that nothing was done without the approbation of the Holy See, and that all have faithfully followed the Rule.

In 1260, St. Bonaventure desired to establish perfect uniformity of dress throughout the Order. He thought the freedom of individuals as to the details not noticed in the Rule was likely to lead to abuses, so he chose the shape of habit then in most general use, and prescribed it for all, and this has since been kept to by the Friars Minor of the Observance. The Seraphic Doctor alludes to the shape of this habit, when he says in his *Speculum Disciplinæ*: "Amplitudo et longitudo vestimenti superflua, sive in manicis, sive *in caputio*, sive *in collario caputii* est admodum fugienda." The Statue of St. Francis placed in the Vatican Basilica among the founders of Orders, is represented with St. Bonaventure's habit, in accordance with the following decree, "We the undersigned, Vice-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Fabric of St. Peter's, by the express order of H.H. Pope Benedict XIII., authorise the Reverend Fathers, the Minister General and the Procurator General of all the Order of St. Francis, to have executed a marble statue of the Seraphic Patriarch St. Francis of Assisi, their Founder, *with the shape of habit worn by the Fathers of the Observance and which the Order, as is proved by authenticated documents, wore from its first institution.* We authorise them to place

it in the Vatican Basilica in the place prepared for it, opposite the statue of the Patriarch St. Dominic.”<sup>5</sup>

The colour of the habit, not being decided by the Rule, has also varied. Those of St. Francis, preserved at Florence, of St. Bernardine of Siena and of many other Saints before the sixteenth century, are of a grey or ash colour. Father Christopher of Varese, the biographer and disciple of St. John Capistran describes the colour of the habit of the Friars of the Observance of the time: “Capistranus custodem carceris ad se vocans, rogare cœpit ut sibi *pannum griseum, quo indui solent Fratres de Observantia Sancti Francisci*, ad carcerem deferret.”<sup>6</sup> Grey was generally the colour used in the first ages of the Order. Later the Conventuals adopted black, the Reformed, the Recollects and the Capuchins brown, while the Observance in Italy and throughout the Cis-montane Provinces wore a darker shade of the same colour. The Discalced and the Friars of the Observance in France, Spain, Portugal, and America alone retained the ash colour; the General Chapter of Victoria, in 1696, recommended them to preserve this custom: “*Panni fabricentur . . . . intexti ex lana alba et nigra in tali proportionem commiscenda ut pannus cinericius evadat, juxta colorem quem videmus inesse tunicis et mantellis S.P.N. Francisci, S. Bernardini Senensis, ac S. Joannis a Capistrano.*”<sup>7</sup> The same colour is prescribed for those members of the Order who become bishops.

No mention of the custom of wearing beards is made in the Rule nor in the oldest constitutions of the Order. Nevertheless in 1226, Honorius III., in his Brief *Ex parte nostra*, allowed the Friars Minor in the missions in Morocco to let their hair and beards grow whenever it

<sup>5</sup> *Chronologia historico-legalis*. <sup>6</sup> Boll. October the twenty-third, p. 497.

<sup>7</sup> *Chronologia historico-legalis*. T. ii. p. 621.



was necessary, "interdum mutatis habitum, barbam nutritis et comam . . . unde *cum hæc sint contra Ordinis vestri instituta . . . super prædictis vobiscum, in illis regionibus, quamdiu præscripta vos arctat necessitas et invitat utilitas, misericorditer dispensamus.*" Availing themselves of this Pontifical dispensation the Franciscan missionaries in the East still wear their beards. Later, in 1528, Clement VII., in his Brief *Zelus Religionis*, allowed all Capuchins to wear their beards.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> According to the Bull of Honorius III. cited above, the custom of allowing their beards to grow was not followed by the Friars Minor in the early times, on the contrary it was considered to be against the Rule. Father Salimbene of Parma, contemporary of Brother Elias, in enumerating in his chronicle the abuses which had been introduced by the fault of this General, also speaks of it as being unusual in his time: "Sub Helya multi fratres laici clericas portabant, ut vidi oculis meis cum habitarem in Tuscia . . . Item aliqui soli, id est sine socio, in hospitalibus morabantur, hoc vidi Senis. . . . Vidi etiam aliquos qui semper barbam longam portabant, sicut faciunt Armeni et Græci qui barbas nutriunt, et conservant. . . . Longum esset valde si vellem ruditates et abusiones quas vidi (sub gubernio Helyæ) referre." *Chronica Salimbene Parmensis*, p. 404. Blessed Thomas of Celano, who was admitted into the Order by St. Francis and was one of his most intimate disciples, relates the following fact: "Cum una die dictum esset ei (beato Francisco), quod Fundanus episcopus dixisset duobus fratribus euntibus Soram, qui sub specie majoris sui contemptus barbam longiorem nutriebant; cavete ne Religionis pulchritudo novitatum hujusmodi deturpetur: surrexit Sanctus continuo, et ad cælum protensis manibus, lacrymis perfusus, in hujusmodi orationis verba, vel potius imprecationis erupit: . . . A te, Sanctissime Domine, et a tota cœlesti curia, et a me parvulo tuo sint maledicti qui suo malo exemplo confundunt et destruunt quod per sanctos fratres Ordinis hujus ædificasti et ædificare non cessas." II. *Legend of Thomas of Celano*, chap. xciii. Here St. Francis evidently did not condemn the practice of wearing a beard in itself, but the bad example thereby given, because it was a new and unusual custom among his Friars, *novitatum hujusmodi*. At that time the religious did not shave so frequently as at present, that was all, but as we have just seen, they did not habitually wear beards. Thus when the same Thomas of Celano, speaking in his first legend of St. Francis' appearance says that his beard was black and scanty: "barba nigra, pilis non plene respersa," he does

The Order of Friars Minor has in the course of ages been exposed to changes of fortune and storms, but though it has sometimes fallen from the heights where its holy Founder placed it, it has always at all times possessed heroic sons whose zeal has maintained within it the spirit of its Seraphic Patriarch. Even that section of the Order whose rules were made less severe, has in spite of all remained one of the glories of Catholicism. Thus the great family of Friars Minor, whether under the name of Observance, Conventuals or Capuchins, has continued in its entirety, a holy family and one devoted to the Church, helping in all her offices, from the humblest to the highest, in other words a family of apostles. Its various modifications depend on the authority of the Church who after careful examination has pronounced her judgments with the wisdom required by the different times and countries, according to the need of souls and for the glory of the Most High.<sup>9</sup>

not mean that St. Francis never shaved. Otherwise his words would contradict what we have just quoted from him as they would also the testimony of other writers and the Brief, *Ex parte nostra* of Honorius III. Moreover, the same biographer mentions that the use of the razor was not unknown to St. Francis: "*Quando radebatur S. Franciscus sæpe rasori dicebat; cave ne mihi magnam coronam facias.*" *Second Legend of Blessed Thomas of Celano*, P. III., chap. xxii. St. Louis of Anjou who lived in the first century of the Order, embraced, as we know, the Rule of the Friars Minor, and wore their habit; a contemporary biographer and an intimate friend of his shows that this illustrious disciple of St. Francis used to shave: "*Factum ut aliquando tonsor, barbam illi dempturus, attulerit argenteam pelvem; sed is aspernatus fastum hunc. . .*" Boll., T. iii., August. Whatever was the exact truth in this matter, itself of small importance, we can only say of it what we have already said about the colour of the Franciscan habit: the Rule prescribes nothing about it, so that the superiors can sanction whichever practice they judge right before God; and this, whichever it be, is always worthy of respect, especially when approved by the Church.

<sup>9</sup> The Observance, the Conventuals and the Capuchins form distinct families or bodies in the Order because each has its head and father, that

The Second and Third Orders of St. Francis have also in past ages had their vicissitudes. But here, too, the Church has arranged and guided everything with the wisdom requisite to keep alive great works and obtain for them the blessing of Heaven. We shall see this in the following chapters.

is, its Minister General. The four sections of the Observance, on the contrary, only form one family or body under one head or father, the Minister General of the Friars Minor. Each of these sections, then, by itself, is a branch of the Family of the Observance, a *member* of the same body, not a family or a body in itself. In fact the general constitutions use the words *Ramus* and *Membrum* to designate each section of the Observance. The same may be said of the Observance and the Conventuals from the time when they divided into two branches (though forming one body and one family under one head) until the moment when Leo X. made them two distinct Families with separate heads. We should also add that all Friars Minor, no matter what their family or branch, are *true sons of St. Francis*, and all descend in a direct and unbroken line from the Seraphic Patriarch whose Rule they follow.

## PART V.

### *The Order of St. Clare.*

THE daughters of St. Clare form but one family in which evangelical poverty, the practice of penance, and the spirit of recollection and prayer are always honoured. The virtues of this spiritual family always and everywhere add a lustre to the Church which is substantially the same though differing in degree. The Rule given by St. Francis to his spiritual daughters has always been perfectly kept by a large number of these privileged souls, it has however been somewhat modified by the Church in order to be more in accordance with the various requirements of nature and grace.

In the beginning, St. Clare and her daughters had no written Rule. They followed the teaching of St. Francis and endeavoured to imitate his absolute poverty, his penance and long prayers and watchings. A written Rule, however, became necessary when this religious body began to increase and spread over the whole world.

In 1219, St. Francis being in Egypt, Cardinal Hugolin remained in charge of his spiritual daughters, and thought it necessary to draw up a Rule for them. He founded it on the Rule of St. Benedict, with certain additions of great severity, he, however, allowed the nuns to possess property and revenues for their support. St. Francis had however forbidden his daughters, as well as the Friars



Minor, to hold any temporal possessions even in common, he wished that in every necessity they should both rely entirely on Divine Providence, and live from day to day on the alms of the faithful. The Cardinal thought that such great abnegation, which had at first been considered too much, even for the Friars, was quite out of the question for cloistered nuns. He, therefore, by the advice of the Pope, made this alteration in the prescriptions of their holy Founder, and in the practice, as it then existed at St. Damian's. This new Rule was at once put in force in the convents then founded, though St. Clare desired to preserve in her community the excessive poverty that she had embraced.

When St. Francis returned to Italy, she told him what had been done in his absence, and besought him to give a definite Rule himself to the Poor Ladies, so as to insure for them the precious treasure of poverty they so eagerly longed for. The Saint having first of all prayed, sought out Cardinal Hugolin and spoke to him with such power about the excellence of poverty, that being touched with such deep abnegation and exalted courage, he changed his opinion. Then, in 1224, St. Francis and the Cardinal together composed for St. Clare and her daughters a set of Rules in twelve Chapters exactly like those of the Friars Minor.

The convents of St. Damian, Florence, Spello, Arezzo, Mantua, Venice, Arcela near Padua, and some others adopted the Rule of St. Francis, others kept that of Cardinal Hugolin which he afterwards confirmed as soon as he was raised to the Chair of Peter as Gregory IX. The Rule given by St. Francis having so far only received a verbal approbation was, shortly before St. Clare's death, solemnly approved by Innocent IV.

After the death of St. Clare, Blessed Isabella of France,

sister of the sainted King Louis, wished to found at Longchamps, near Paris, a convent of the Humility of our Lady, under the Rule of the Sisters of St. Damian's as given by St. Francis, but as this seemed to her to be too difficult for her community, the devout princess begged St. Bonaventure and some other doctors of the Order of St. Francis to introduce certain modifications so as to allow the possession of property and revenues. The Rule thus modified was approved in 1258, by Alexander IV. at the request of St. Louis. Shortly afterwards the holy king and his pious sister obtained other modifications from Urban IV. and the Longchamps Rule was adopted in certain communities of the Order.

Thus there were three different sets of Rules in force among the daughters of St. Clare, of whom some strictly observed the poverty laid down by St. Francis while others possessed property and followed either the Rule of Cardinal Hugolin or that of St. Francis as modified for the convent of Longchamps. These differences appeared even in their names, some being called *Recluses* or *Damianites*, and the others *Sisters Minor* or *Poor Ladies*.

Pope Urban IV. acting on the advice of St. Bonaventure the General of the Order, resolved to bring all the Poor Clares under one Rule. He, therefore, took that of St. Francis, and introduced into it certain modifications similar to those at Longchamps, and in 1264, he promulgated this new Rule and commanded it to be adopted throughout the Order. He, moreover desired all the nuns to adopt the name of *Sisters of St. Clare*. At the same time, some of the communities which had so far followed the Rule of St. Francis with its strict poverty and without any modification, obtained leave from the same Pontiff to preserve their original Rule.

Thus there are two kinds of Observance and two branches in the Order of St. Clare. (1) The *Poor Clares* who follow the Rule of St. Francis without any modification, or the *First Rule of St. Clare*. (2) The *Urbanist Clares*, who follow the same Rule with the modifications introduced by Urban IV., allowing the possession of property, or the *Second Rule*. The life of these latter, notwithstanding its comparative amenities, is still one of the most severe in the Church. The Urbanist Poor Clares have given to the Order BB. Isabella of France, Margaret Colonna, Cunegundes and Yolande, nieces of St. Elisabeth of Hungary, Matthia of Nazzarei, Paula Montaldi of Mantua, whose feasts are kept in the Order, and many others whose Cause is now being examined at Rome.

The great Reform of the Friars Minor, in the fifteenth century, extended to the Order of St. Clare. Many convents of the Urbanist Poor Clares re-adopted the First Rule under the direction of the Friars Minor of the Observance. St. Bernardine of Siena was at this time the great reformer of the Order of St. Clare, he gave the First Rule to two hundred convents which he had either founded or reformed<sup>1</sup> and his disciples lent him powerful aid in the work of restoration.

The convent of Corpus Christi at Mantua, one of the first reformed by St. Bernardine, became a nucleus for founding many other convents of Poor Clares in Italy and gave abbesses to Verona, Padua, Parma, Venice, Forli, Feltre, Reggio, Ferrara, etc. St. Catharine of Bologna, one of the greatest lights of Italy, lived in the convent of Ferrara and then, in 1456, founded one at Bologna under the jurisdiction of the Superiors of the Observance. In 1439, St. Bernardine of Siena, then

<sup>1</sup> *Theatrum Etrusco-Minoriticum*, by Father Terrinca, p. 126.

Vicar General of the Order,<sup>2</sup> sent Blessed Felicia Meda to found a convent of Poor Clares at Pesaro where Blessed Seraphina Sforza was to lead her holy life. In 1447, St. John Capistran founded a similar community at Aquila, and made Blessed Antonia of Florence the abbess. Blessed Eustochium founded a convent at Messina, and Blessed Baptista Varani one at Camerino, under the First Rule and the authority of the Friars Minor of the Observance. Thus there arose in Italy, in the fifteenth century, many convents where the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare re-appeared. The Church has decreed the public veneration of the six illustrious virgins whom we have just mentioned, and who were the most splendid fruits of the reform of St. Bernardine of Siena and his disciples in Italy.

About the same time Almighty God inspired St. Colette to accomplish the same work in France. This incomparable virgin, whose life was marked by so many miracles, founded or reformed seventeen communities under the First Rule of St. Clare, and gave to her daughters special constitutions in order to insure their perfect observance of the Rule. Those Poor Clares who follow the First Rule as altered by St. Colette's Constitutions, are called *Colettine* Poor Clares, to these belonged Blessed Louisa of Savoy of the convent at Orba. After the death of St. Colette, her reform spread rapidly in France and Flanders. In the year 1462, the Colettines of Lézignan, near Narbonne, founded the convent of Gandia<sup>3</sup> in Spain

<sup>2</sup> *Manuscript Chronicle of the Order of St. Clare*, by Father Mariano of Florence, P. ii., chap. xxi. Gonzaga, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> About the year 1520 the convent of Colettines of Gandia had for abbess Magdalene Xavier, eldest sister of St. Francis Xavier. This holy religious having heard that her father wished to take the youthful Xavier from his studies, implored him to renounce this project, assuring him



whence the reform penetrated to the royal convent at Madrid, founded by Jane of Austria, daughter of Charles V., and to six other communities.<sup>4</sup>

In 1540, Mother Mary Longa founded at Naples a convent of Poor Clares under the First Rule. These religious received special Constitutions from the Capuchins and thus gave birth to the institute of the *Capuchin Clares*. This reform gave to the Order St. Veronica Giuliani.

The family of St. Clare is at the present time still divided into two branches, the *Poor Clares* under the First Rule, and the *Urbanist Poor Clares* under the Second Rule. Some among the Poor Clares are called *Colettines*, because they preserve the Constitutions of St. Colette, others follow the Constitutions given by the Capuchins, and are called *Capuchinesses*.

This Order of Blessed Clare has thus become a fertile soil, where bloom the flowers of Christian virtues in honour of the Heavenly Spouse. These flowers, though each different, are all lovely, but in different degrees, according to the brilliance of their colouring and the fragrance of their perfume.

The family of St. Clare includes a vast number of

that her brother would be the future apostle of the Indies and a great preacher of the Gospel. This great Saint thus owes his conversion and vocation to the prayers of the humble daughter of St. Colette. St. Francis Borgia, while yet in the world, was the noted protector of the Poor Clares of Gandia, his grandmother, his aunt, his sister and his own daughter were religious in this fervent community. (Boll. x., Oct.)

<sup>4</sup> Gonzaga, p. 1096. The reform worked among the Poor Clares by St. Bernardine of Siena and St. Colette, aimed at restoring to them the First Rule of St. Clare. At this epoch the greater number of communities followed the Second Rule, and this not owing to any relaxation, but because Pope Urban IV. had commanded that this Rule should be adopted throughout the Order.

queens and princesses, who desired to immolate themselves in the silence of the cloister. To this Order likewise belong numberless holy souls, whom God deigned to favour with signal graces. Of these illustrious daughters of St. Francis and St. Clare, twenty-two of whom we have already spoken, have been raised by the Church to her altars. The Cause of many others has been brought before the Holy See. We may instance Venerable Febronia Ansaloni, who died at Naples in 1718, Venerable Jane Mary of the Cross, foundress of the Urbanists of Roveredo in the Tyrol, the marvel of her time (1673), Venerable Angela Maria Astorch of Barcelona, Capuchiness (1765); Venerable Florida Ceoli, Capuchiness, of the convent at Citta di Castello (1767), Venerable Clare Isabella Gherzy, abbess of the Urbanists of Gubbio (1800), Venerable Mary Louisa Biagini, lay-sister of the convent of the Urbanists at Lucca (1811), etc.

The Seraphic Order includes two other institutes of cloistered religious, the *Conceptionists* and the *Annonciades*, who were established towards the end of the fifteenth century, under the jurisdiction of the Friars Minor of the Observance. We shall speak of them under this title, although they do not directly belong to the Order of St. Clare.

The Conceptionists were founded by Blessed Beatrice of Sylva, daughter of an ancient and illustrious family connected with the royal houses of Spain and Portugal. The Blessed Virgin appeared to her several times, and commanded her to establish an Order in honour of the Immaculate Conception. The first convent was founded at Toledo, in 1489, by virtue of a Bull of Innocent VIII. Cardinal Ximenes, while Provincial of the Observance in Castile, obtained from Alexander VI. permission for

these new religious to follow the Rule of St. Clare. In 1511, Julius II. gave them a special Rule and made them subject to the jurisdiction of the Superiors of the Observance. Leo X., in 1520, granted them the graces, privileges and indulgences enjoyed by the Friars Minor, the Poor Clares, and the members of the Third Order. The Conceptionists spread most widely in Spain. They wear a white habit and scapular, a sky-blue mantle and Franciscan cord. The Venerable Mary of Jesus of Agreda belonged to this Institute.

The Royal Order of the *Virgin Mary* or of the *Annonciade* was founded, in 1501, by St. Jane of Valois, Queen of France, and by Blessed Gabriel Maria, and placed under the jurisdiction of the Friars Minor of the Observance. The special aim of this pious institution is to honour and glorify Mary and to imitate her virtues. Thus in the sixteenth century when Protestantism heaped every outrage upon the Mother of God, blaspheming her blessed name and insulting alike her virginal purity and divine Maternity, God raised up an army of virgins whose lives were consecrated to repeating her praises and imitating her virtues. In the life of St. Jane of Valois (February the fourth), we have spoken of the origin of the Annonciade, its history, rules and spirit. The Poor Clares, the Conceptionists and the Annonciades devote themselves exclusively to the contemplative life, as voluntary victims they unceasingly offer to God their prayers, sighs and tears, in order to draw down His grace on this earth, make reparation for the world's ingratitude, disarm the Eternal wrath, and expiate the crimes of sinners, in a word to perpetuate in the bosom of the Church, the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

## PART VI.

### *The Order of Penance.*

WE have still to speak of the Order of Penance, or Third Order, and of the modifications which it underwent in the course of centuries. Founded at the outset for persons living in the world, the Third Order has been in many countries formed into Regular houses, like the two other families of St. Francis, it possesses many communities serving the Church in the cloister as well as in the world where it claims innumerable children. There is, then, the Secular Third Order and the Regular Third Order.

A little after the death of St. Francis some members of the Third Order, wishing to separate themselves from the world in order to practise their Rule with greater perfection and to devote themselves with fuller liberty to the works of zeal and charity, inspired by the spirit of this institute, formed among themselves communities of men, and especially of women, who followed the Rule of the Third Order with simple vows. St. Elisabeth of Hungary is looked upon as having been the first to practise the Third Rule with vows, the Church has therefore named her patron of the sisters of the Regular Third Order.

These religious of the Third Order, not being cloistered, employed themselves in works of mercy, nursing the poor



and sick in asylums and hospitals and teaching the young. The works which the numberless active Orders now effect with so much edification for the Church were done by the Regular Third Order during six centuries. Indeed from the thirteenth century the disciples of St. Francis have devoted their services to the sick and ignorant. There are still to be found many communities of sisters of this institute in France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, England, Germany; and, everywhere, these worthy daughters of St. Francis carry out the same works as their predecessors with indefatigable zeal.

At the commencement of the fifteenth century Blessed Angelina of Marsciano founded cloistered communities of the Regular Third Order. These religious were consecrated to the contemplative life and in some places occupied themselves in the education of young girls, the Church granted them solemn vows and placed them under the authority of the Superiors of the Observance. The cloistered communities of the Regular Third Order multiplied rapidly in Europe, and, guided by the Spirit of St. Francis, soon developed all religious virtues.

The pious institute of the Franciscans of the Regular Third Order, like all the other branches of the great family of St. Francis, has produced many heroic souls whom the Church has raised to her altars—St. Hyacintha of Mariscotti, BB. Angelina of Marsciano, Lucy of Salerno, and Elisabeth of Valdsech. There are, moreover, many others whose cause of beatification is being examined—Venerable Jane of the Cross, who died in 1535 at Cuba near Toledo, Venerable Mary Crescentia Hoess, who died at Haufbeuren in the diocese of Augsburg in 1744, Lilia Crocefissa who died at Viterbo in 1773.

There arose, too, numerous communities of religious men of the Regular Third Order who also made solemn vows

and devoted themselves, as did the First Order, to the apostolic ministry. The institute of religious of the Third Order has now almost completely died out in Europe. It still flourishes in Ireland and America. It gave to the Order Blessed Jeremy Lambertenghi, a priest honoured with a public *Cultus* in the Cathedral of Forli, and Paul of Ambrosiis, also a priest, who died in Sicily.

The Secular Third Order of St. Francis produced from the outset the illustrious saints of whom we have already spoken. Under the special protection of the Church it extended into every country in Europe, bearing such rich fruit that the powers of Hell in anger raised up at different times fearful tempests against it, but the Church espoused its cause. Gregory IX., Clement V., John XXII., triumphantly defended it from the unjust attacks and calumnies of its enemies. In the fifteenth century St. John Capistran published in its defence the remarkable treatise entitled, *Defensorium Tertii Ordinis a sancto Francisco instituti*, and by his exertions the Order of Penance took a new growth and yielded new fruit.

In the sixteenth century the Friars Minor of the Observance established the Third Order in Asia in the Philippine Islands and even in Japan, where a great number of its members sealed with their blood the faith of Jesus Christ. Seventeen of these martyrs were canonised in 1862, and twenty-seven others were beatified in 1867. In America the Fathers of the Observance established this admirable institute, which, in 1686, reckoned as many as one hundred and eighteen thousand members. The great servant of God, Christopher Columbus, who made known to us the existence of the New World, was, as is well known, a son of St. Francis, being a member of the Third Order.

The Order of Penance has included all classes of society

in its ranks. Several Popes, one hundred and thirty sovereigns, a multitude of prelates, princes and noblemen, have held it an honour to wear the habit of St. Francis and follow his Third Rule. It is well known that Pius IX., of holy memory, and Leo XIII., now gloriously reigning, received the habit of the Third Order from the Friars Minor of the Observance. But this Order is rendered still more illustrious by the number of Saints and Blessed which it has given to Heaven. About ninety of its members have been raised by the Church to her altars, and there are others whose Cause of beatification is now being examined at Rome. Among the secular Tertiaries we may instance, Venerable Francis of Sant' Antonio, a Neapolitan, Venerable Antony Alphonsus Bermeio, who died in 1758 in the diocese of Valladolid, Venerable Mary Crucified of the Wounds of Jesus, who died at Naples in 1826, Venerable Jean Marie Baptiste Vianney, Curé of Ars, etc. Finally many others have received the title of Blessed on account of the continuous homage paid them.

The Order of Penance has of late wonderfully multiplied. In France there are as many as a hundred thousand Tertiaries. On the twenty-ninth of March, 1879, Leo XIII. received a deputation of Tertiaries from Assisi, when, having spoken of the mission of St. Francis in the Church, the Holy Father added, "I hold it certain and am firmly convinced that in our century the Third Order is the most efficacious remedy for the present ills, the best means to bring back the world to the true and solid practice of the Gospel. Therefore I am resolved to promote its diffusion as I did whilst at Perugia."

The Third Order of St. Francis is then divided into the Secular Third Order and Regular Third Order. Each of these two branches contains several categories.

The Regular Third Order comprises, (1) The religious

who take solemn vows and occupy themselves in the holy ministry. Blessed Jeremy Lambertenghi belonged to this Observance. (2) The cloistered nuns who take solemn vows like St. Hyacintha of Mariscotti and Blessed Angelina. (3) The religious who only take simple vows and occupy themselves in works of charity. (4) The nuns who take simple vows and are not cloistered, like Blessed Elisabeth of Valdsech. These are devoted to all external works of zeal and charity. (5) The Oblate Brothers, like Blessed Peter of Siena, who serve in the convents of the First Order, and the Oblate Sisters employed by the cloistered religious of the Order.

The Secular Third Order includes, (1) The Recluse sisters, like St. Viridiana and Blessed Jane of Signa. (2) The Hermits, such as St. Conrad of Piacenza, BB. Gerard of Villamagna, Torello of Poppi, William of Scicli, Francis of Pesaro, and Vitale of Assisi. The Hermits and Recluses were numerous in the first years of the Order, they preceded the Regular Third Order. Some among them even made vows and were considered as religious. The solitary or hermit's life is now no longer led. (3) The sisters who, living at home wear the habit of the Third Order and make the simple vow of chastity like St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds. The Superiors of the First Order alone have the right to admit them to this way of life, with the authority of the Ordinary, and by conforming to the prescriptions of the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, dated the seventh of November, 1620. (4) Lastly, all the other secular Tertiaries, priests or laymen, both married and unmarried. The former belong to a Confraternity instituted by the authority of the Superiors of the Order, the latter, living in places where there is no Confraternity, observe the Rule separately.



Among these secular Tertiaries some were established under the direction of the Friars Minor of the Observance, others under that of the Conventuals, others again under that of the Capuchins.

These various branches and categories of the Third Order form but one family, *but one Order*, as declared by Benedict XIII. in his Constitution, *Paterna Sedis*, “Nos eundem sanctum, meritorium, et christianæ perfectioni conformem, necnon verum et propriè Ordinem, *unum in toto orbe ex sæcularibus aliisque collegialiter viventibus, et Regularibus promiscue compositum . . . fuisse semper et esse decernimus et declaramus.*”

## PART VII.

### *The Work of St. Francis of Assisi.*

WE have now shown what was the work of Francis of Assisi. Its different divisions, far from preventing its diffusion, have only helped therein, and its holiness has blossomed with greater loveliness, day by day, as is proved by the two hundred and fifty-two elect of God whom it has given to Heaven and whom the Church has raised to her altars.<sup>1</sup>

The division of the family of St. Francis has helped its extension by rendering it accessible to all tastes and by adapting it to the varied gifts of nature and grace in order better to serve the Church and souls. Its diffusion was so great that, in 1680, the Minister General

<sup>1</sup> The Order of Friars Minor has given to the Church one hundred and thirty-nine Saints or Blessed who are honoured with a public Cultus. Namely, forty-nine during the first centuries and before any division of the Order, and afterwards seventy-eight Friars Minor of the Observance, two Conventuals, and ten Capuchins. The Order of St. Clare has contributed twenty-two Saints or Blessed, and the Third Order about ninety-one. In all there are two hundred and fifty-two Saints or Blessed of the Seraphic Order, whose feasts are kept in the Order or in some particular Church. There are besides more than sixty servants of God whose Cause of Beatification is being examined, and who consequently have the title of *Venerable*. Lastly there are a number of disciples of St. Francis, who died during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and even as late as the year 1534, who by reason of their virtues and miracles have from time immemorial been honoured with the title of *Blessed*.

of the Observance had under his authority more than sixty thousand Friars, and nearly forty thousand nuns, divided into one hundred and sixty-five Provinces or Custodies. The Conventuals had at the same time fifteen thousand religious in thirty-six Provinces, and the Capuchins more than twenty-six thousand, forming fifty-four Provinces, which raises the number of generous souls who served under the banner of St. Francis to more than *one hundred and forty thousand*. But the number would be still greater if we were to include the nuns who were subject to the jurisdiction of Bishops and the countless members of the Third Order.<sup>2</sup> Thus Louis of Grenada was able to say that, in his time, the First Order of St. Francis exceeded in number all the other Orders of the Church together. So, that in this way were fulfilled the promises of Heaven to the holy Founder, who, like a new Abraham, saw his race become as numerous as the stars of the firmament. Francis saw his family cover the whole world, and extend the kingdom of God everywhere, by consecrating themselves, like their Divine Master, to strengthen and console the weak and afflicted.<sup>3</sup>

The Seraphic Order continued to increase till the end of the eighteenth century. At this terrible moment all Religious Orders felt the effect of the dreadful revolution and experienced considerable losses, some indeed entirely disappeared in the midst of the political storms.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Menologium*, pp. 185—187.

<sup>3</sup> "Compostellæ stabat Franciscus orans et vigilans, cum ei Angelus Dei familiaris apparens, et de multis colloquens . . . aperte prædixit futurum, ut per omnes terræ angulos ejus Ordo multiplicatus sine numero sese diffunderet." *Orbis Seraphicus*, T. i. p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> If the Religious Orders have lost in numbers, prison officials and the police have wonderfully increased in Europe. This is an inevitable consequence, for every diminution of moral life in a country necessitates, in exact proportion, a greater exercise of the public power of repression.

The Order of St. Francis, however, though weakened by the loss of many Provinces, continues its Divine mission in our own times, the Friars Minor still labour in every country for the Church and souls, whilst the daughters of St. Clare, and the two-fold band of the Third Order, both Secular and Regular, still lead their life of sacrifice and charity.



## PART VIII.

### CATALOGUE OF THE SAINTS AND BLESSED OF THE SERAPHIC ORDER PROPOSED BY THE CHURCH TO PUBLIC VENERATION.

#### FIRST ORDER.

##### I.

#### PREVIOUS TO ANY DIVISION OF THE ORDER.

OUR Holy Father St. Francis, 1226.—St. Berardus, St. Peter, St. Otho, St. Accursus, St. Adjutus, martyred in Morocco, 1220.—St. Daniel, St. Angelo, St. Samuel, St. Domnulus, St. Leo, St. Hugolin, St. Nicholas, martyred at Ceuta, 1227.—St. Antony of Padua, 1232.—St. Bonaventure, Cardinal Bishop of Albano, 1274.—St. Benvenuto, Bishop of Osimo, 1274.—St. Louis of Anjou, Bishop of Toulouse, 1299.—St. Thomas of Tolentino, martyred in India, 1321.

BB. John of Perugia and Peter of Sassoferrato, martyred at Valencia, 1231.—B. Benvenuto of Gubbio, 1232.—B. Bentivoglis de Bonis, 1232.—B. Pellegrino, 1232.—B. Rizziero, 1236.—B. Roger of Todi, 1237.—BB. Stephen of Narbonne and Raymund of Carbona, martyred at Avignonnet, 1242.—B. Guy of Cortona, 1251.—B. Andrew of Spello, 1254.—B. Gualterius, 1258.—B. Gandolfo of Binasco, 1260.—B. Egidius, or Giles, of Assisi, 1262.—Blessed John of Pinna, 1271.—B. John of Parma, 1289.—B. Conrad of Ascoli, 1289.—B. Benvenuto of Recanati, 1289.—B. Andrew of Segni, 1302.—B. Peter of Treja, 1304.—B.

Raniero of Arezzo, 1304.—B. Conrad of Offida, 1306.—B. Liberato of Lauro, 1307.—B. Francis of Fabriano, 1322.—B. John of Alvernia, 1322.—B. Bartholomew of Montepulciano, 1330.—B. Odoric of Pordenone, 1331.—B. Gentile of Matelica, martyred in Persia, 1340.—B. Sanctus of Urbino, 1390.—B. Julian of Valle, 1399.—B. James of Strepa, Archbishop of Lemberg, 1414.

Eighteen Saints and thirty-one Blessed, forty-nine in all.

## II.

### SINCE THE DIVISION OF THE ORDER INTO SEVERAL BRANCHES.

#### I.—THE FRIARS MINOR OF THE OBSERVANCE.

St. Bernardine of Siena, *Obs.*, 1444.—St. Peter Regalati, *Obs.*, 1454.—St. John Capistran, *Obs.*, 1456.—St. Didacus, *Obs.*, 1463.—St. James della Marca, *Obs.*, 1476.—St. Peter of Alcantara, *Disc.*, 1562.—St. Nicholas Pick, *Obs.*, St. Jerome of Weert, *Obs.*, St. Theodoric, *Obs.*, St. Nicaise, *Obs.*, St. Willalde, *Obs.*, St. Godfrey, *Obs.*, St. Antony of Weert, *Obs.*, St. Antony of Hornaire, *Obs.*, St. Francis of Rhodes, *Obs.*, St. Peter, *Obs.*, St. Cornelius, *Obs.*, martyrs of Gorcum, 1572.—St. Benedict of San Fradello, *Ref.*, 1589.—St. Paschal Baylon, *Disc.*, 1592.—St. Peter Baptist, *Disc.*, St. Martin of the Ascension, *Disc.*, St. Francis Blanco, *Obs.*, St. Philip of Jesus, *Disc.*, St. Gonsalvus Garzia, *Disc.*, St. Francis of St. Michael, *Disc.* martyrs in Japan, 1597.—St. Francis Solano, *Obs.*, 1610.—St. Pacificus of San Severino, *Ref.*, 1721.—St. John Joseph of the Cross, *Disc.*, 1734.—St. Leonard of Port Maurice, *Ref.*, 1751.

B. Thomas of Florence, *Obs.*, 1447.—B. Herculanus of Piagale, *Obs.*, 1451.—B. Matthew, Bishop of Girgenti, *Obs.*, 1455.—B. Gabriel Ferretti, *Obs.*, 1456.—B. Arcangelo of Calatafimi, *Obs.*, 1460.—B. Antony of Stroncone, *Obs.*, 1461.

—B. Mark of Bologna, *Obs.*, 1478.—B. Pacificus of Cerano, *Obs.*, 1482.—B. Simon of Lypnica, *Obs.*, 1482.—B. John of Dukla, *Obs.*, 1484.—B. James of Bitetto, *Obs.*, 1490.—B. Peter of Molliano, *Obs.*, 1490.—B. Bernardine of Feltre, *Obs.*, 1494.—B. Angelo of Chivasso, *Obs.*, 1495.—B. Mark of Montegallo, *Obs.*, 1497.—B. Bernardine of Fossa, *Obs.*, 1503.—B. Vincent of Aquila, *Obs.*, 1504.—B. Ladislaus of Gielnow, *Obs.*, 1505.—B. Francis of Calderola, *Obs.*, 1507.—B. Timothy of Montecchio, *Obs.*, 1510.—B. Egidius, or Giles, of Lorenzana, *Obs.*, 1518.—B. Gabriel Maria, *Obs.*, 1532.—B. Salvador of Orta, *Obs.*, 1562.—B. Nicholas Factor, *Obs.*, 1583.—B. Sebastian of Apparitio, *Obs.*, 1600.—B. Andrew Hibernon, *Disc.*, 1602.—B. Julian of St. Augustine, *Obs.*, 1606.—B. Peter of the Assumption, *Disc.*, martyr in Japan, 1617.—B. John of St. Martha, *Obs.*, martyr in Japan, 1618.—B. Richard of St. Anne, *Obs.*, B. Peter of Avila, *Disc.*, B. Vincent of St. Joseph, *Disc.*, B. Apollinare Franco, *Obs.*, B. Francis of St. Bonaventure, *Disc.*, B. Paul of St. Clare, *Disc.*, martyrs in Japan, 1622.—B. Francis Galvez, *Disc.*, martyr in Japan, 1623.—B. Louis Sotelo, Bishop in Japan, *Obs.*, B. Louis Sassandra, *Obs.*, martyrs in Japan, 1624.—B. Francis of St. Mary, *Disc.*, B. Bartholomew Laurel, *Obs.*, B. Antony of St. Francis, *Disc.*, martyrs in Japan, 1627.—B. Antony of St. Bonaventure, *Disc.*, B. Dominic of Nangazaki, *Disc.*, martyrs in Japan, 1628.—B. John of Prado, *Disc.*, martyr in Morocco, 1631.—B. Jerome Torres, *Disc.*, B. Gabriel Magdalene, *Disc.*, martyrs in Japan, 1632.—B. Humilis of Bisignano, *Ref.*, 1637.—B. Charles of Sezze, *Ref.*, 1670.—B. Thomas of Cori, *Obs.*, 1729.

Twenty-nine Saints and forty-nine Blessed, seventy-eight in all.

## 2. FRIARS MINOR CONVENTUALS.

St. Joseph of Cupertino, 1663.—B. Bonaventure of Potenza, 1711.

## 3.—FRIARS MINOR CAPUCHINS.

St. Felix of Cantalice, 1585.—St. Seraphin of Montegrano, 1604.—St. Joseph of Leonissa, 1612.—St. Laurence of Brindisi, 1619.—St. Fidelis Martyr in Switzerland, 1622.

B. Benedict of Urbino, 1625.—B. Bernard of Corleone, 1667.—B. Bernard of Offida, 1694.—B. Angelo of Acri, 1739.—B. Crispin of Viterbo, 1750.

Five Saints and five Blessed, ten in all.

The whole Order of Friars Minor has, therefore, produced one hundred and thirty-nine Saints and Blessed, whose feasts are kept in the Order or elsewhere.

## SECOND ORDER.

St. Clare of Assisi, 1252.—St. Agnes of Assisi, 1253.—St. Colette, 1447.—St. Catharine of Bologna, 1462.—St. Veronica Giuliani, *Cap.*, 1727.

B. Philippa of Mareri, 1236.—B. Helena of Padua, 1242.—B. Salome, 1268.—B. Isabella of France, *Urb.*, 1270.—B. Agnes of Bohemia, 1280.—B. Margaret of Colonna, *Urb.*, 1284.—B. Cunegundes, *Urb.*, 1292. B. Yolande, *Urb.*, 1298.—B. Matthia of Nazzarei, *Urb.*, 1300.—B. Clare of Rimini, 1346.—B. Felicia Meda, 1444.—B. Antonia of Florence, 1472.—B. Seraphina Sforza, 1478.—B. Eustochium of Mesina, 1499.—B. Louisa of Savoy, *Col.*, 1503.—B. Paula Montaldi of Mantua, *Urb.*, 1514.—B. Baptista Varani, 1527.

Five Saints and seventeen Blessed, twenty-two in all.

## THIRD ORDER.

St. Elisabeth of Hungary, 1231.—St. Viridiana, 1244.—St. Ferdinand, King of Castile, 1252.—St. Rose of Viterbo, 1253.—St. Louis, King of France, 1270.—St. Margaret of Cortona, 1297.—St. Bartolo, 1300.—St. Yves, 1303.—St.



Clare of Montefalco, 1308.—St. Elzear, 1323.—St. Roch, 1327.—St. Elisabeth of Portugal, 1336.—St. Conrad, 1351.—St. Bridget, 1373.—St. Frances of Rome, 1440.—St. Jane of Valois, 1505.—St. Angela of Merici, 1540. Seventeen Japanese Martyrs, 1597, canonized in 1862.—St. Hyacintha of Mariscotti, *Tert. Reg.*, 1640.—St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds, 1791.

B. Luchesio, 1242.—B. Gerard of Villamagna, 1242.—B. Umiliana Cerchi, 1246.—B. Nevolo, 1280.—B. Peter of Siena, 1289.—B. Torello of Poppi, 1289.—B. Davanzato, 1295.—B. Gerard of Lunel, 1299.—B. Jane of Signa, 1309.—B. Angela of Foligno, 1309.—B. Raymund Lulle, martyr, 1315.—B. Francis of Pesaro, 1350.—B. Michelina of Pesaro, 1356.—B. Delphine, 1360.—B. Ugolino Magalotti, 1373.—B. Thomas of Foligno, 1377.—B. John of Peace, 1381.—B. Lucy of Salerno, *Tert., Reg.*, 1400.—B. William of Scicli, 1404.—B. Marie de Maillé, 1414.—B. Henry, King of Denmark, 1415.—B. Elisabeth of Suabia, *Tert. Reg.*, 1420.—B. Angelina, *Tert. Reg.*, 1435.—B. Vitale of Bastia, 1491.—B. Paula Gambara, 1505.—B. Jeremy Lambertenghi, *Tert. Reg.*, 1515. Twenty-seven Japanese martyrs beatified in 1867.—B. Luisa Albertoni, 1533.—B. Hippolytus Galantini, 1630.

Thirty-six Saints and fifty-five Blessed, ninety-one in all.

The Seraphic Order, therefore, has given to the Church about two hundred and fifty-two Saints and Blessed, whose feast is kept in the Order or by some particular church.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This catalogue includes the names of the Saints and Blessed whose lives are given in the course of this work, that is to say, of all those whose Feast is kept in the Order, or in some other place. We must make some remarks on this point. 1. It may happen that there are still some Saints or Blessed whose feast is kept in some particular place and whom we may have omitted from not being aware of the fact. 2. There are a great many others who have no particular feast, but to whom a certain devotion has been paid from time immemorial, or to whom at least the title of *Blessed* is given, and of whom we have not spoken in this work. 3. Among the Saints and Blessed of the Third Order, there are some whom certain

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The number would be more considerable, if all those were added who, without having a special office, are in legitimate possession of a certain *cultus* or only of the title of *Blessed*.

writers, strangers to the Order, positively refuse to acknowledge as Tertiaries, we have, nevertheless not hesitated to class them among the members of the Third Order, because there are sufficient proofs in favour of our opinion. 4. There are other Saints whom some writers believe belonged to the Third Order, nevertheless, we have abstained from mentioning them, because we do not consider that the proofs are sufficient to make it certain. Our humble opinion as to the insufficiency of proof ought not, however, to decide the question. 5. The length of each life is in proportion to the importance and interest of the materials which have come to hand, so that certain lives are given in greater detail than others.

VENERABLE SERVANTS OF GOD OF THE  
ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS OF WHOM THE  
CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION HAS BEEN  
LAID BEFORE THE HOLY SEE.<sup>1</sup>

I.—FRIARS MINOR OF THE OBSERVANCE.

V. Francis Ximenes, *Obs.*, Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo and Regent of Spain, 1517.

V. Antony Scalmati, *Obs.*, Priest, died at Calatagirone, in Sicily, 1552.

V. Antony Pagani, *Obs.*, theologian at the Council of Trent, died at Vicenza, 1589.

V. Angelo del Pas, *Ref.*, Priest, native of Perpignan, died at Rome, 1595.

V. Bartholomew of Saluzzo, *Ref.*, Priest, died at Rome, 1617.

V. Francis of Gonzaga, *Obs.*, Minister General of the Order, died Bishop of Mantua, 1620.

V. Innocent of Chiusi, *Ref.*, Lay-brother, died at Rome, 1631.

<sup>1</sup> In giving this list of the venerable servants of God, we have tried to make it as complete as possible. It may be remarked that the Cause of some among them has been suspended or stopped during the course of procedure. This, for example, is the case with the VV. Francis Ximenes, Francis Gonzaga, Friars Minor of the Observance, with the VV. John of Maurienne, Nicholas Molinari, Capuchins, with the VV. Louisa Biagini, Maria d'Agreda, and Jane of the Cross. We have, nevertheless, inserted the names of these servants of God, as their Cause having once been introduced, they remain in lawful possession of the title of *Venerable*.

V. Bernardine of Calanzano, *Ref.*, Priest of the Province of Corsica, 1653.

V. Benedict Bacci, *Obs.*, Priest, died at Prato, in Tuscany, 1658.

V. Bonaventure of Barcelona, *Ref.*, Lay-brother, founder of the convent of St. Bonaventure at Rome, 1684.

V. Peter Bardesi, *Obs.*, Lay-brother, died at Santiago, in Chili, 1700.

V. John Baptist of Burgundy, *Ref.*, Priest, native of Bellicut in the diocese of St. Claude, in France, died at the age of twenty-six. His tomb is in the convent of St. Bonaventure, at Rome, 1726.

V. Antony Margil, *Obs.*, evangelized all the provinces of South America, and died at Mexico, 1726.

V. Dominic of Orvieto, *Ref.*, missionary in Italy, died at Orvieto, his native place, during the course of a mission, 1738.

V. Theophilus of Corte, *Obs.*, Priest of the Province of Corsica, died at Fucecchio, in Tuscany, 1740.

V. Benignus of Cuneo, *Ref.* missionary in Piedmont, died at Cuneo, 1744.

V. Philip of Velletri, *Obs.*, Priest, died at the convent of Ara Coeli, at Rome, 1764.

V. Peter of Bagnaia, *Ref.* Priest, 1768.

V. Ugolino of Sommaripa, *Obs.*, Lay-brother, died in Piedmont, 1772.

V. Michael Angelo, *Disc.*, Lay-brother, 1800.

V. Simon Philippovich, *Obs.*, native of Bosnia, died in the convent of Ripatransone, in Italy, 1802.

V. Louis of the Crucifix, *Disc.*, Priest, died at Naples, 1803.

V. Generoso of Premosillo, *Obs.*, Priest, died at the convent of Amelia, in Umbria, 1804.

V. Egidius of St. Joseph, *Disc.*, Lay-brother, died at Naples, 1812.

V. Leopold of Gaiche, *Ref.*, missionary in Italy, died at the convent of Monte Luca, in Umbria, 1814.



V. John of Triora, *Obs.*, Priest, martyred in the Chinese missions, 1816.

V. Francis of Ghisone, *Obs.*, clerk in Minor Orders, native of Corsica, died in the convent of Civitella, in Italy, 1832.

The Minister General of the Friars Minor of the Observance is also engaged in preparing for the introduction of the Cause of several servants of God—Father Laurence Lombardi of Monsano, *Obs.*, died at Osimo, 1797. Father Francis of Naples, *Ref.*, died 1841. Father Paul of Recanati, *Obs.*, died in the convent of Santa Croce of Monte Cassiano, in 1842. Father Modestus of Jesus and Mary, *Disc.*, died 1854. Brother Mariano of Rocca Casale, *Obs.*, Lay-brother, died May thirty-first, 1866, in the convent of Civitella, at the age of eighty-eight.

## 2.—FRIARS MINOR CONVENTUALS.

V. Dominic Girardeli, of Muro, Priest, died at Amalfi, 1692.

V. Raphael Kilinski, Priest, died in Poland.

V. Antony Fasani, Priest, native of Lucera and religious of the Province of Naples, 1742.

V. Antony Sandreani, Priest, died at Jesi in the Marches, 1752.

V. Antony Lucci, died Bishop of Bovino, in the kingdom of Naples, 1757.

The General of the Conventuals is engaged about the introduction of the Cause of Father Benvenuto Bambozzi, who died at Osimo in 1875.

## 3.—FRIARS MINOR CAPUCHINS.

V. John of Maurienne, Priest of the Province of Savoy, died at Chambéry, 1614.

V. Honoré Champigny, Priest, of the Province of France, 1624.

V. Bonaventure Barberini, died Bishop of Ferrara, 1743.

V. Andrew of Burgio, Lay-brother of the Province of Sicily, 1772.

V. Laurence of Zibello, Priest of the Province of Lombardy, 1781.

V. Felix of Nicosia, Lay-brother, died at Nicosia in Sicily, 1787.

V. Nicholas Molinari, successor to V. Antony Lucci, Conventual, in the episcopal see of Bovino, 1792.

V. Diego of Cadiz, apostle of Andalusia, 1801.

V. Gesualdo of Reggio, missionary in Calabria. He was called the *Sledge-hammer against Freemasonry*, 1803.

V. Francis of Lagonegro, Priest, died at Naples.

The General of the Capuchins has requested leave to introduce the Cause of Brother Francis of Campo Rosso, of the Province of Genoa, 1866.

#### 4.—THE DAUGHTERS OF ST. CLARE.

V. Jane Mary of the Cross, *Urbanist*, virgin, founded five monasteries and died in that of Roveredo, in the Tyrol, 1673.

V. Febronia Ansaloni, *Urbanist*, virgin, died at Palermo, 1718.

V. Antonia Maria Belloni, *Urbanist*, virgin, 1719.

V. Angela Maria Astorch, *Capuchiness*, virgin, born at Barcelona and foundress of the monasteries of Saragossa and of Murcia, 1765.

V. Florida Ceoli, *Capuchiness*, virgin, disciple of St. Veronica Giuliani, died at Città di Castello, 1767.

V. Clare Isabella Gherzy, virgin, *Urbanist* of the monastery of Gubbio in Umbria, 1800.

V. Louisa Biagini, virgin, lay-sister in the monastery of the *Urbanists* at Lucca, 1811.

V. Maria of Jesus d'Agreda, virgin, *Conceptionist*, author of the *Mystical city of God*, 1665.

The Minister General of the Friars Minor of the Observance, has requested leave to introduce the Cause of two

handmaids of God of the Order of St. Clare, Mother Mary Agnes Clare Steiner, foundress of the *Clarisses* of Nocera, in Umbria, to whom she gave the First Rule of St. Clare with some mitigations, 1862, and Mother Mary Cherubina Clare of St. Francis, Abbess of the *Poor Clares* at Assisi, 1872.

#### 5.—THIRD ORDER REGULAR.

V. Paul de Ambrosiis, Priest, died at Cropano, in Sicily.

V. Januarius of Lumello, Priest, died in Lombardy in the sixteenth century.

V. Jane of the Cross, virgin, died in the monastery of Cuba, near Toledo, 1534.

V. Crescenza Hoëss, virgin died in the monastery of Kaufbeuren, diocese of Augsburg, 1744.

V. Lelia Crocefissa, virgin, founded five monasteries and died at Viterbo, 1773.

The Fathers of the Third Order Regular have applied to obtain approbation of the *cultus*, paid from time immemorial to Blessed Jeremy Lambertenghi of Como.

#### 6.—THIRD ORDER SECULAR.

V. Antony Alfonsus Bermeio, founded a hospital in the diocese of Valladolid, and devoted himself to the service of the sick, 1758.

V. Francis of St. Antony, died at Naples, 1764.

V. Mary Crucified of the Sacred Wounds of Jesus, virgin, died at Naples, 1827.

V. Elisabeth Sanna, widow, died at Rome, 1857.

V. John Mary Baptist Vianney, Curé of Ars, 1859.

The Minister General of the Friars Minor of the Observance, has applied for leave to introduce the Cause of Mother Anna Lapini, foundress of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, called *Stigmatines*, 1860, and for the confirmation of the *cultus* from time immemorial paid to Blessed Johannin, *Tertiary of St. Francis*, who died in 1372, and whose relics rest in the church of Cagli, in Umbria.

## PART IX.

### HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PROVINCE.

#### *Introduction.*

A HISTORY is not a panegyric, and yet, at the sight of the great things wrought for the Church in England by means of the Franciscan Order, we can hardly refrain from exclaiming with the Psalmist. "How marvellous are Thy works, O Lord."

The whole Catholic world still rings with the echo of the Papal Briefs, and of the oft reiterated invitations of the Sovereign Pontiff, in which, both in public and in private, the Vicar of Christ exhorts all the faithful to enrol themselves under the banner of St. Francis. "*If the Franciscan Institutions flourish, faith, piety, christian manners will also flourish,*" are the words of the Holy Father, on the memorable occasion of the Encyclical *Auspicato*, in one word, the consequence he draws, is that society will be regenerated and the world saved.

Doubtless, the Order of St. Francis is but one, and the humblest amongst the many Orders whose mission it is, "to renew the face of the earth," and yet, just as the simple flower of the field proves to us the truth of the existence of a Divinity, so the history of this Order is sufficient to prove the truth of the Divine origin of the Gospel which says, "He who humbleth himself shall be exalted."



The Seraphic Order can show magnificent pages in the history of all nations. Whether we turn to France, where in the person of St. Louis the model of kings, we see the coarse woollen habit of St. Francis seated on a throne, or to Germany where St. Elisabeth stands at the head of the many noble ladies who have deemed the Tertiary's habit the brightest of their jewels; or to Italy where the sons of St. Francis were the peace-makers between turbulent factions, and exercised an ennobling influence on language, art, and sculpture, we find the same richness of annals. Spain, Portugal, and the East, can each furnish their own bright pages. Nor let it be for one moment supposed that England, rich, independent, self-sufficient in her island security, has not one of the most brilliant pages in the history of the Order vowed to rigid poverty, humility, and disinterested zeal for the good of others. Scarcely have the sons of the Poor Man of Assisi landed on these shores, before the words of the Gospel, "*All the world has come after them,*" are literally realized. Witness Kings whose counsellors they become, Bishops whose humble aids they make themselves, the clergy to whom their example is as a sanctifying leaven, the learned whom they enlist in their cause, the people whose afflictions they comfort, and whose poverty they honour by sharing it. We might add, that amongst all the nations which the sons of St. Francis have evangelized, England holds a place of honour, if she may not more truly be said to occupy the first place. And this influence on all classes is not a transitory thing, the result of a passing enthusiasm. Whether we study the three centuries which preceded the so-called English Reformation, or the dark days of persecution, or the second spring, when, invigorated by the blood of her martyrs, the English

Province was restored again, to witness for the faith and to labour for the conversion of this unhappy country, we shall ever find the Friar Minor true to himself, carrying everywhere the standard of the Cross, and giving an example of disinterested zeal and apostolical poverty. Through all vicissitudes, the Rule of St. Francis was observed in England, with a fidelity which recalls the words of our Lord to St. Francis on the mount Colombo. "*I will that this Rule be kept literally, literally.*" And, if the past be the promise of the future, who can fail to hope that the great Franciscan family, so influential in this country in days gone by, will have no small part in rendering England once more the Isle of Saints?

But let history speak for itself.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER IN ENGLAND.

AMONGST the first companions of St. Francis, there was an Englishman, remarkable alike for his sanctity and learning. It was at the request of this friar, Brother William,<sup>1</sup> that immediately after the General Chapter held at Assisi in 1219, St. Francis commissioned Brother Agnellus of Pisa<sup>2</sup> to set out for England, and appointed

<sup>1</sup> As our Lord elected twelve Apostles from amongst seventy-two disciples, so St. Francis chose twelve to be his first religious. . . . The twelve foundations of the Order were chosen men; they were all holy except Brother John of Capella, who becoming, like another Judas, a leprous spot in the Order, left it in wrath and being thus abandoned by God into the hands of the devil, he went and hung himself. So that even in his perverse disciple Francis might be conformed to Christ. And as in the place of Judas St. Mathias was chosen, who is counted as one of the twelve, so the place of the above named Brother John was taken by Brother William, an Englishman, and a most perfect religious. The eminent sanctity and perfection of his life was made manifest by so many miracles, that it seemed as if he would outdo his holy Father St. Francis. He was a man of extraordinary learning and a doctor of divinity.<sup>1</sup> He died in 1232, and was buried at Assisi, close to the body of St. Francis. Fearing that the many wonders worked at his grave would cast a shade over the renown of St. Francis, Brother Elias, then General, going to visit his tomb in 1238, commanded him to work no more miracles, and from that day they ceased.

<sup>2</sup> Mark of Lisbon, vol. i., p. 7., chap. xxi. Fran. à Sta. Clara. *Hist. Min.* p. 3.

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<sup>1</sup> Francis. à Sta. Clara. *Hist. Min. Prov. Angl.*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> St. Antoninus, *Hist. Titul. M. of Lisbon*, B. i., chap. xxviii. Wadding, vol. i. anno 1232. *Franciscan Martyrology*, March the seventh, p. 91.

him Provincial of the new Province. In the convent of Mount Alverno<sup>3</sup> there is a picture of Brother Agnellus receiving this obédience from the hands of the Seraphic Patriarch. In the middle of the seventeenth century the original document still existed in the palace of the Bishops of St. Omer.<sup>4</sup>

“I, Brother Francis of Assisi, Minister General, command thee, Brother Agnellus of Pisa, in virtue of obédience, to go to England and there take the office of Minister Provincial. Farewell.—1219. Brother Francis of Assisi.

Brother Agnellus was at this time guardian of the first house of the Order built in Paris. Although thirty years of age, owing to his deep humility, he was still a deacon. Brother Agnellus was in high esteem both for his prudence and holiness. Of the seven friars who started with him to establish the English Province, five were lay brothers. Brother Richard of Devonshire and Brother William Essebey were Englishmen and in Minor Orders. It is related of Brother William that, on the Provincial in France asking him: “Will you go to England?” he replied, “Father, I know not whether I will or not;” and on being pressed to explain this answer he added, “I know not what I will, because my will is not my own, but my Superior’s who may determine it as he pleaseth.”

On their way to England the friars were detained some months by their brethren in Paris, “for the mutual consolation and assistance of each other.”<sup>5</sup> It was here that Brother Agnellus became acquainted with Brother Richard Ingeworth, a holy and learned English priest. Brother Richard received the habit from Br. Agnellus and came to England with him. He was the first Franciscan

<sup>3</sup> Wadding, *Annal. Min.* anno 1219.

<sup>4</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Wadding *Annal.* Anno, 1219.



who ever preached in this country. After making several foundations, he was, in 1230, made Provincial of Ireland. Eventually he went to Syria and there died in 1238, in the midst of fruitful missionary labours.

The little band of nine friars landed at Dover on the third of May, 1220.<sup>6</sup> From thence they proceeded to Canterbury, where they were hospitably entertained by the Benedictines, and then taken in at what was styled "the Poor Priest's Hospital," till a part of a school attached to this hospital was fitted up for them. Here they remained till the Ember days of September, when

<sup>6</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara. *Hist. Prov. Angl.* p. 3. *Wadding Annal*, anno, 1220. Mark of Lisbon. V. i. The exact date of the arrival of the friars in England has often been disputed. Most English writers assert that they landed in the autumn of 1224, "about four years after the king's coronation," adding in support of this statement, that the Dominicans, by whom they were entertained at Oxford, within a year of their arrival, only came over in 1222. But apparently there is some diversity of opinion as to the date of the arrival of the Dominicans themselves. Collier<sup>1</sup> places their coming in 1219. It must be remembered that Henry III., was crowned twice, first at Gloucester 1216, and again at Westminster by Stephen Langton in 1220. Ireland, Wood, and others who place the arrival of the Franciscans in 1224, quote from Eccleston's MSS., *De Adventu Minorum*.<sup>2</sup> But, although many passages in Eccleston's graphic picture of the Friars' daily life, imply he was an eye-witness of much he relates, there is nothing to prove that the dates given by him do not start from a misconception of the statement four years after the king's consecration. On the other hand, the whole Records of the Order point to 1220. This date is also attested by Robert Hare's MSS. catalogue of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London, preserved in the Arundel Library. The rapid spread of the Order caused Brother Agnellus to send for some more friars, and the arrival of these latter in 1224 may account for the confusion. It may be added, for further confirmation, that the letter of Honorius III., presented by

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastical History. P. i. p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> This valuable MSS. which forms part of the Cotton MS. was printed and edited by Dr. Brewer in 1857. It forms the first volume of the *Monumenta Franciscana*.

Brother Agnellus was made a priest, and Brother Richard of Devonshire subdeacon. On the day of the Ordination, the Archdeacon, in bidding as is customary the candidates to approach, raised his voice saying to the Friars: "*Accedant Fratres Ordinis Apostolorum*," "Draw near, ye brothers of the Order of the Apostles," a name by which the friars continued to be known for many years.<sup>7</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury himself, announced their arrival in the following remarkable words: "Some religious have come to me, calling themselves penitents of the Order of Assisi, but I call them of the Order of the Apostles."

Very shortly after his arrival, Brother Agnellus had

Agnellus to the king is dated: "the third year of our Pontificate," that is, 1219. In the general division of the Provinces of the Order, begun 1240 by Haymo of Faversham, an Englishman, Provincial of England and fourth General of the Order, England is ranked as the second Province on this side of the Alps. In this division of the Order made by St. Bonaventure, eighth General, in 1260, the Provinces were ranked according to the date of their establishment. As several new Provinces were established in 1223-24, there is every reason to suppose that after the French Province established 1216, the English was the next. In all the catalogues of the Provinces of the Order, it is placed as the second. At the General Chapter, held at Terani in Umbria, 1500, it is ranked as the fourth of the Order, that is, second "on the further side of the Alps." In the order of precedence at a General Chapter, the Provincial of England had the same place assigned to him. When the English Province was restored in 1625, it was thought worth a special Act, to state it "restored to its former honour and place." An author of some authority<sup>3</sup> tells us that in 1220, Henry III. "conversed familiarly with Brother Agnellus and his companions at Oxford," and Matthew of Paris, an English monk of St. Alban's, a man of authority, since he was the king's chronologist and an eye-witness of the first coming of the Friars, writing in 1243, says: "Which friars began to build their first habitation in England scarce four and twenty years ago."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Wadding. *Annal. Min.* anno 1220.

<sup>3</sup> Harold, *Epitome Annal. Ord. Min.* 1220.

<sup>4</sup> *Collect. Ang. Min.* p. 7.

presented his letter of obedience to the king, Henry III., and had been "graciously received,"<sup>8</sup> not only out of respect to St. Francis whose fame had already spread throughout the world, but also out of regard to the commendatory letter of the Pope, Honorius III.<sup>9</sup>

For more than three centuries the sovereigns of England were the great patrons and benefactors of the Order. Henry III., besides making the Friars three grants of land to enable them to enlarge their enclosure at Oxford, built a house for them at Winchester and at Nottingham, and commenced the Friary at Southampton, besides grants in other towns, and alms sent to help to build the Church at Assisi. Edward I. founded the famous house of the Order at Cambridge, on the site now occupied by Sydney-Sussex College, and also built a large hall where the public business of the University was carried on. He likewise built a Friary at Reading, which he endowed with a good library, and induced the Bishop of Exeter to build the Friars a house at Exeter.<sup>10</sup> His first Queen

<sup>8</sup> Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 134.

<sup>9</sup> Wadding. T. i. p. 200. anno 1219. "Honorius, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to all Christian princes, and to our well-beloved brethren, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, and other Prelates of the Church, Health and Apostolical Benediction.

"Whereas our well-beloved sons, Brother Francis of Assisi and his companions of the Institute and Order of Minors, despising the vanities of this world, have made choice of a way of life deservedly approved by the holy Church; that after the example of the Apostles they may travel through divers nations to sow the seed of the Word of God: we entreat you all, and exhort you in the Lord, and moreover command you, by our Apostolical Letters, that whensoever the bearers of these presents shall think fit to come to you, you receive them as Catholics and true believers, and that for the honour of God, Whose true servants they are, and for the respect you owe to us, you shew them favour and courtesy. Given at Rome on the third of the ides of June, in the third year of our Pontificate."

<sup>10</sup> Dugdale, vol. vi., p. 1509.

Eleanor was buried in the Franciscan Church of Bedford which she founded.<sup>11</sup> Edward II. was a benefactor to the houses of Scarborough and Colchester.<sup>12</sup> Edward III. was the chief founder or benefactor of Walsingham, Berwick, and Maidstone. The Black Prince, in the deed by which he granted the Friars leave to take as much stone out of his quarry at Cheylesmore as they needed for building,<sup>13</sup> styles himself their Patron. In 1383, when some misunderstanding between the Universities and the Friars led to certain laws being passed against them, Richard II. in a letter, addressed to the Chancellors of both Universities and to the whole nation, declares that, "His Majesty both for himself and his successors takes upon himself the protection and defence of the said Friars and their privileges, as also their houses etc." This letter dated from Westminster,<sup>14</sup> and signed by the King under his private seal, is confirmed by a charter granted in 1401 by Henry IV. Henry V. provided for the Friars at Beaumaris when in distress. Henry VI. used every argument to induce St. John Capistran to come himself to England, promising to build several new houses for the Observants.<sup>15</sup> Edward IV. built a Friary or "small chantrie"

<sup>11</sup> Dugdale, vol. vi., p. 1509.

<sup>12</sup> Dugdale, p. 1511.

<sup>13</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, P. ii., p. 33.

<sup>14</sup> *Collect.*, Pt. ii., p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> The full explanation of the names of the different branches of the great Franciscan family, has been given in the general history of the Order. It is only necessary to add here, that in the General Chapters, held in Burgundy in 1467, and at Placentia in 1470, England is reckoned as a Province of the Observance.<sup>1</sup> In 1484, it was incorporated amongst the Observants, in the General Chapter held at Burgos, in Spain.<sup>2</sup> The various mitigations, which had crept into the Order, had been always strenuously opposed by a majority in England, and although, after the Council of Constance, the greatest part of the houses refused their consent to the separation, they were in effect Observants, living indeed in com-

<sup>1</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Mark of Lisbon, vol. iii., b. 6., chap. xli.



at Greenwich.<sup>16</sup> Henry VII. founded the house adjoining the royal palace at Greenwich, the first religious house to feel the persecuting hand of Henry VIII., and the centre of the second Province restored in 1625. Henry VIII. in the early part of his reign was the warm friend and benefactor of the Friars, not only in England but of the whole Order. When under the cruel sway of Selim, the

munity with the Conventuals, but renouncing all temporals.<sup>3</sup> In 1499, at the General Chapter held at Malines, it was unanimously resolved that the Province of England should hereafter have two votes in all General Chapters, after the manner of other reformed Provinces. "In this Chapter, the English Observants were completely and solemnly formed into a Province, with the consent of all its parts; so that the whole Franciscan Province of England, made up of a coalition of the Conventuals and the Observants, was now incorporated in the Observance. Thus the Province continued till the decree of Leo X., by the *Bulla Concordia*, 1517, when the whole Order of the Observants prevailed, and got the superiority over the Conventuals. *However the English Franciscans were always one single body or Province of Friars*, for neither the chronology of General Chapters, nor the histories of our nation say, that the Observants ever withdrew themselves from the obedience of the Order, though they lived in separate houses; but, on the contrary, the Conventuals of England united themselves with the Observants."<sup>4</sup> In fact, with very few exceptions, none of the houses enjoyed any rents. Of the eighty Friaries suppressed in 1534—1540, sixty-nine are classed in the catalogues of religious houses as "not rated, no rents," and of the eleven remaining houses, only one, that of Bridgwater, can be clearly proved to have possessed more than the value of the site when bought for and given to the Friars, and Ware, in Hertfordshire, which received three shillings annually with some tithes. The cause of the Observance was warmly taken up by the Sovereigns of England, and the Letter of Henry VI. to St. John Capistran in 1454, together with the fact that Henry VI., Edward IV., and Henry VII. founded several houses for the Observants, has led some authors to speak as if there had been two distinct Provinces, and the Observants had been "brought over to England," after the Council of Constance, whereas in fact, they had always been there.

<sup>16</sup> Weever, *Fun. Mon.*, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.*, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara apud *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 211—212.

Franciscans in Palestine were obliged to take refuge in Cyprus, Henry VIII. wrote them a letter of sympathy, saying that he had ever since his tenderest years felt the deepest affection for them, and that seeing their sufferings and privations in the cause of truth, he had resolved to send them a yearly alms of 1000 scudi.<sup>17</sup>

Immediately after the ordination, Brother Agnellus resolved to send out some Friars to make foundations. Brother Igneworth and Brother Richard proceeded to Oxford, but on their way they were compelled one stormy night to seek shelter at a Grange belonging to the Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon.

“ Having gently knocked at the Gate, they humbly begged a lodging for the love of God, being ready to perish with hunger and cold. The porter, to whom they made this earnest address, viewing this distressed couple of Friars, and observing their beggarly dress, their mortified looks, and their dialect somewhat foreign, and imagining them to be some persons in masquerade that made fools of themselves for the diversion of the spectators, ran immediately to the Prior to tell him the agreeable news; whereupon he, with the sacristan, the procurator and two other younger monks, made haste to the gate and readily invited the disguised strangers to come in, hoping to be diverted with morris-dancing, or other tricks of pastime. But when the Friars with a composed grave look, assured them that they were mistaken, and that they were no such fellows, but were men that had chosen to serve God in the institute of an apostolical life,—the monks being thus disappointed of their expected merriment, began now to be severe upon the poor men, and thrust them out of doors, with coarse treat-

<sup>17</sup> This letter was written by the king's own hand, March the twenty-third, 1516. *Storia dei Francescani*, by F. Marcellino da Civezza, O.S.F. T. vi., p. 396. N.B.—The full title of this work is *Storia delle Missioni Francescane*.

ment. And now the two poor disconsolate Friars, destitute of any shelter, and not knowing what counsel to take, wandered up and down, and must have been forced to take what repose they could under some tree or other, had not Almighty God inspired one of the said young monks to take some care of them. So this young religious prevailed with the porter, (as soon as the Prior and the other monks were gone to rest) to open the gate to these distressed creatures, whom he relieved with a refreshment, as seasonable to them as it was charitable, after which he placed them in the hay-loft, and having recommended himself to their prayers (whom he now perceived to be no jesters,) he returned to his cell. But when this young religious was fallen into a sleep he seemed to himself as if he saw Christ our Lord sitting on a tribunal and passing the last Judgment, and that he heard Him command the masters or rulers of this place to be brought before Him, and then appeared over against Him a certain person clothed in the habit of a Friar Minor, who accused the Prior and his three other monks after the following manner. "O just Judge! revenge the blood of Thy servants, whom the barbarous cruelty of these men has turned out of doors, to the dangers of cold and hunger and a most bitter night, remember, O Lord, that these persons have refused the common necessities of life to Thy servants,—who have abandoned all worldly pleasures to gain souls for whom Thou hast suffered death,—relief which they would have bestowed upon buffoons." Then Christ turning to the Prior, asked him with an angry voice, to what Order he belonged? and he replying 'to St. Benedict's,' our Lord asked St. Benedict (who stood near at hand) if this was true? And when he answered that these were overthrowers of his Institute, in which he had given a command that his houses should always be open to all strangers. The sentence was immediately passed, and (as it was represented in this dream) the prior, sacristan, and procurator, were hanged on a neighbouring elm-tree. Then Christ looked upon the monk

by whose charitable assistance the two poor Franciscans were relieved, and asked him what Order he was of? But he, fearing to be a partner in the punishment if he owned the truth, answered, that he was of the Order of that poor man who stood there, and therefore our Blessed Saviour presently demanded of the said poor man (who now appeared to be St. Francis,) if that was true? and St. Francis, running to the young monk cried out 'he is mine, Lord, he is mine,' and from this present moment, I receive him into my arms, and into my family, and saying this he so closely embraced this his new pupil, that he suddenly awaked from his sleep, and laying hold of his clothes in haste, he ran, half undressed, to the Prior, and found him and the other monks in such a deplorable condition that they seemed to be as near being strangled, as if they had in good earnest been expiring by a real hanging; but struggling as it were with death, and with much ado awaking, they were seized with a dreadful fear, at the hearing of the young monk's dream. When the pious young man made haste to look for his guests in the hay-rick-yard, he found they were already gone off, thinking it not safe for them to be caught by the Prior. In fine, from hence such an awful reverence and religious respect possessed mens' minds towards the Franciscans, that not only this young man, but also the Abbot of Abingdon himself, having heard what passed at the aforesaid Grange, went to Oxford some time after, and there took upon him the humble habit of St. Francis, and became a member of the Franciscan community."<sup>18</sup>

On their arrival at Oxford, the Friars were hospitably received by the Dominicans who entertained them for several days, till a certain Robert Mercer, a wealthy townsman lent them a house in the parish of St. Ebbes near the Watergate. In about sixteen months he made this same

<sup>18</sup> Wood, *Antiquit. Oxon.*, B. i., p. 69.



house over to the Corporation of Oxford for the use of the Franciscans, whose number had so increased that they were forced to build a church and house. Amongst those who helped them to raise the walls of the Friary which became a nursery of learning, were Ralph Maydstone, afterwards Bishop of Hereford,<sup>19</sup> the Abbot of the Canons Regular of Osney, the Abbot of Abingdon, who all eventually entered the Order. But the principal founder was the King himself, who being desirous to have the Friary built as near as possible to the Court, then resident at Oxford, not only bore the main expenses,<sup>20</sup> but also put his own hand to the work, being the first to break the ground for the new building.<sup>21</sup> His example was followed by many others, who laying aside all grandeur vied with each other in humbly serving the masons with stones and

<sup>19</sup> St. Antoninus, the Dominican Archbishop of Florence, gives the following account of the bishop's vocation to the Seraphic Order. "When he was on a certain time at prayers, he was in spirit carried away into heaven, to behold the mansions of the heavenly citizens, and was strangely astonished when, amongst the saints of divers Orders, he could not see so much as one of the Friars Minor, for whom he had a great affection. Then appeared to him as a most beautiful woman, Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, who asked him the cause of his perplexed thoughts? To whom he replied, that he was amazed that among the saints of other Orders, there was not one Friar Minor to be seen, notwithstanding they were in such great esteem in the Church of God, and were very instrumental to the salvation of many souls. To whom she then answered, saying: 'Come with me, and I will show you where they dwell;' then she let him see the Friars Minor, more closely united to Christ, and said, 'look you where they are, under the very wings of the Judge. Save thy soul with them.'"<sup>1</sup> By the consent of Pope Gregory IX., he resigned the See of Hereford, and spent the remaining five years of his life in obscurity in the Friary at Gloucester, where he was a most bright example of humility, poverty, obedience, and all Christian perfection, to his brethren. He was a very learned man, and a famous divine.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Mark of Lisbon, T. i., Lib. ix.      <sup>21</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 23.

<sup>1</sup> St. Antoninus, *Hist. titul.*, P. iii., chap. ix.      <sup>2</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 43.

mortar.<sup>22</sup> This Friary was finished in 1228, but in 1246 the King made two fresh grants to the Friars, first, of the street which ran under the city wall, *from the Watergate to the little postern gate of the wall towards the castle*, and secondly, of an Island in the Thames, with leave to *cause a bridge to be made over the arm of the river and to enclose the said island with a wall as they shall think most proper*.<sup>23</sup>

From Oxford, Brother Ingeworth and his companion proceeded to Northampton, and from thence to Cambridge. In both places their simple foundations were soon replaced by larger buildings raised by the charity of their benefactors. Northampton was the best built and largest of all the Friar's houses.<sup>24</sup> The two Friars whom Brother Agnellus sent to London, Brother Henry of Cervise and another lay-brother were also kindly received by a certain John Trevor, who hired them a house in Cornhill, which, with the assistance of some other citizens was speedily fitted up for them, but very soon the devotion and charity of the citizens, led them to build the Friars a large house in the market place of St. Nicholas in Farringdon-ward within. The chief founder of this house was one Irwin, or Ewin,<sup>25</sup> who afterwards became a lay-brother of the Order. Queen Margaret, the second wife of Edward I., was a great benefactress to this house, and was buried in the Friars' Church, of which she built the choir, three other Queens of England were likewise benefactresses and were also buried there.

The Provost of the 'Poor Priests' Hospital at Canterbury gave the Friars the plot of ground on which they built their first house in England. This piece of ground was held for their use by the Corporation of Canterbury,<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Wood, *Antiq Oxon.*, Lib. i., p. 70.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> Leland, *Itin.*, vol. i., p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Leland, *Collectan.*, vol. i., p. 108. Francis à Sta. Clara in *Hist. Min.*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.*, Lib. i., p. 68.

the Friars being by their profession incapable of holding any right to it. Here they lived till 1270, increasing daily in number and reputation. Amongst the first benefactors were Stephen Langton, then Archbishop of Canterbury, his brother the Archdeacon, Henry, Lord Sandwich, and a certain noble lady called by Eccleston *Domina Inclusa de Bagington*.<sup>27</sup> In 1270, one John Diggs,<sup>28</sup> an Alderman, purchased for them an island called Biunewith, in the river Stour, and here the Friars remained till the suppression of the religious houses.

From these five centres the Order spread rapidly. Foundations were made in all directions, and the arrival of a fresh band of friars sent at Agnellus' request in 1224, to act as guardians and teachers to his numerous English novices, confirms the statement of Mathew of Paris, that "all England was suddenly filled and replenished with these men."<sup>29</sup> In the General Chapter held at Narbonne in 1258 by St. Bonaventure, the English Province is reckoned as having seven Custodies, possessing in all forty-nine Friaries, and one thousand two hundred and forty-two Friars.<sup>30</sup> In 1399, Bartholomew of Pisa reckons these Custodies as comprising sixty houses, namely :

The Custody of London, consisting of nine Friaries—London, *Canterbury, Winchelsea, Southampton, Ware, Lewes, Chichester, Salisbury, Winchester*. The Custody of York comprising seven Friaries. York: *Doncaster, Lincoln, Boston, Beverley, Scarborough, Grimsby*. The Custody of Cambridge, comprising nine houses. Cambridge: *Norwich,*

<sup>27</sup> *De Adventu Minorum, Collat. iii.*

<sup>28</sup> *Antiquities of Canterbury*, p. 100. Sta. Clara, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> P. Civezza, *Hist. delle Franciscane*, T. vii., p. 494. Eccleston, *De Adventu*, hap. ii.

Colchester, Bury St. Edmunds, Dunwich, Walsingham, Yarmouth, Ipswich, Lynn. The Custody of Bristol, comprising nine Friaries. Bristol: Gloucester, Bridgwater, Hereford, Exeter, Carmarthen, Dorchester, Cardiff, Bodmin. The Custody of Oxford, comprising, Oxford: Reading, Bedford, Stamford, Nottingham, Northampton, Leicester, Grantham. The Custody of Newcastle, comprising, Newcastle: Dundee, Dumfries, Haddington, Carlisle, Hartlepoole, Berwick, Roxburgh, Richmond. The Custody of Worcester, comprising nine Friaries, Worcester: Preston, Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury, Coventry, Chester, Litchfield, Lancaster, Stafford.

The Friars had not been long at Oxford, before Brother Agnellus established a school, which he placed under the direction of the celebrated Dr. Grostete, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln.<sup>31</sup> To this school a numerous audience daily flocked, and in it were trained the Friars who in a few years were justly esteemed the most learned men of the nation, and who, becoming masters of the University, raised it to a position not even second to Paris itself.<sup>32</sup> Sixty-seven Franciscans successively taught as Professors at Oxford. From amongst these sixty-seven doctors the Chancellor of the University was not unfrequently chosen. Seventy-three Friars were Professors at Cambridge,<sup>33</sup> and so great was the reputation of these two Universities, that it was necessary to have taught elsewhere, before being allowed to be a Professor in them.

The first Franciscan Professor at Oxford, was Brother Adam of Marisco, to whose letters, preserved amongst the state papers, and now published,<sup>34</sup> we owe a vivid

<sup>31</sup> *Collect. Ang. Min.*, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Dr. Brewer's Preface to *Monumenta Franciscana*, p. lxxxi.

<sup>33</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.* p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> *Monumenta Franciscana*, edited by Dr. Brewer.



picture of the times and the state of England. Adam of the Marsh, as he is frequently called, from his birthplace in Somersetshire, entered the Order in 1220. He had been a priest for three years, and was already remarkable for his learning and holiness. We are told that Dr. Grostete "loved him the best of all his beloved Franciscans."<sup>35</sup> His fame had reached Italy, and St. Francis himself sent for him, and recommended him with St. Antony of Padua, to the Abbot of Vercelli, in Piedmont, where the University of Padua then was. Under the guidance of one of the greatest men of the age, Adam made rapid progress not only in learning, but also in holiness. On his return to England, he succeeded Brother William Eton as Professor in the Friary at Oxford.<sup>36</sup> A few years later he was made Doctor of Divinity of the University.<sup>37</sup> Dr. Grostete himself preached on this occasion, exhorting his late pupil to be an example to the faithful, in word and deed. In 1230 he again went to Italy, accompanied by Brother Haymo of Faversham, afterwards the fifth General of the Order, and another English friar, to support the cause of the strict observance of the Rule as instituted by St. Francis, against the mitigations proposed by Brother Elias. These three, together with St. Antony of Padua, and many other holy and learned friars, pleaded so eloquently for the rigorous observance of holy poverty, that Pope Gregory IX. deposed Brother Elias, and Brother John Parens was

<sup>35</sup> *Anglia Sacra*, P. ii., p. 342.

<sup>36</sup> This Brother William Eton, was a friar of singular learning and piety. He was already a priest when Brother Agnellus admitted him into the Order, in Paris, on his way to England, in 1219. Being a good preacher, he was soon ordered to follow his Provincial. He preached first in London,<sup>1</sup> and was then sent to Oxford, where he taught under the direction of Dr. Grostete.

<sup>37</sup> Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.*, Lib. xviii., p. 72.

<sup>1</sup> *Collectanea Angl. Min.*, p. 21., Francis à Sta. Clara., *Hist.*, p. 2.

chosen General. Brother Adam has been surnamed the Illustrious Doctor, and is ranked as one of the Oxford writers of the Order. Besides his correspondence which is addressed to all classes, and embraces all subjects, now advising Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, now vindicating the cause of a poor widow, Adam of Marisco considerably enriched the Friary of Worcester, where he was professed, with valuable manuscripts. He was commissioned by Alexander IV. to examine the miracles of St. Richard of Chichester, who died in 1253, and on going to Rome to make his report for the introduction of St. Richard's cause, he was sent to England as Papal Legate, with Brother John of Kent.<sup>38</sup>

The first Franciscan doctor of divinity and professor of the University of Cambridge was Brother Vincent of Coventry who entered the Order with Adam of Marisco, and had shared his studies under Dr. Grostete at Oxford.

But the labours of the English Franciscans were by no means confined to their own country. To the English Province, of which the seventh General, John of Parma, used to say,<sup>39</sup> "*Oh, that this Province was placed in the middle of the world, that it might be an example to all the churches,*" the whole Christian world is indebted. The European reputation of the University of Oxford, under Adam of Marisco, was obtained by the members of the Franciscan school. To the English Franciscans, Lyons, Paris and Cologne owed their most eminent professors. Repeated applications were made from abroad for English friars.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> John of Kent was for many years a canon of Angers in France. He wrote several books, chiefly on law, and the rubrics. He renounced his canonry to enter the Order, where he ended his days, in 1258, having lived in it a pattern of humility and patience.

<sup>39</sup> Eccleston, *De Adventu Min.*, Collat. xiv., p. 68.

<sup>40</sup> *Monumenta Franciscana*, pp. 93, 344, 365, 379.

The father of the schoolmen, as he has been termed,<sup>41</sup> Alexander of Hales, and three of the most original geniuses the world has ever seen, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and William Occam,<sup>42</sup>—also the champions of the strict observance of the rule of St. Francis, Aymo of Faversham and others, all belonged to the English Province. For more than three centuries it furnished the Holy See with Legates, cardinals, nuncios and assessors, the Sacred College with readers, the Church with Archbishops and Bishops, and powerful antagonists against heretics and heresy. It supplied the Order with Generals and Provincials, Ministers and Visitors, the Universities with Professors, the sciences with Doctors, kings and princes with confessors and trusty ambassadors in delicate negotiations,<sup>43</sup> and, when in 1618, the question of restoring it was discussed at the General Chapter held at Salamanca under Benignus of Genoa, sixty-second General, he summed up its history in these words: “*Provinciam Angliæ olim inter nos et apud nos inter omnes Provincias esse celebrem.*”<sup>44</sup>

To the long list of martyrs and confessors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many of whom we have had the joy of seeing raised to the altars of the Church, the names of several English friars who shed their blood by the sword of the infidel might be added. Nor must we forget that it was an English Franciscan, Duns Scotus, who gave the initiative towards the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception in our own day,

<sup>41</sup> *Storia delle Franciscane*, vol. vii., P. i., p. 499, 503.

<sup>42</sup> In speaking of Occam here, he is merely quoted as a great scholar, and the chief founder of the nominalist school.

<sup>43</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Fragmenta Provinciæ Angliæ*, p. 81.

<sup>44</sup> *Fragmenta*, p. 82. The English Province was with us formerly celebrated amongst all Provinces.

by defending it publicly in the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>45</sup> A Franciscan writer of the eighteenth century<sup>46</sup> says, that the century which sees the solemn definition of this doctrine, which has always been believed, will see great things in the Church. The sequel of the history of the Order in England, seems like an earnest that in the restoration of her dowry to Mary, the children of St. Francis, the defenders of her Immaculate Conception, have an important mission to perform.

In 1227, Brother Philip Walleys and Adam of York were sent to Lyons, as public professors of philosophy and science. In 1231, John Anglicus was made Provincial of Saxony, an office he held till he was sent to England, as Commissary-general, in 1246. The same year, Innocent IV. appointed him his legate and collector for the expenses of the war against the infidels.<sup>47</sup>

In 1233, Brother Aymo of Faversham was sent, by Gregory the IX., in company with another English friar, as legate to Constantinople, to treat with the Patriarch on

<sup>45</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.* p. 127. <sup>46</sup> Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice.

<sup>47</sup> The Holy See possesses the power to dispense from a vow for motives which are superior to the vow itself. The commands of a religious institute give place to a command from a superior authority, and if the law of fasting is not binding in certain cases, how much more the special laws of a religious body. St. Francis clearly never intended to bind those, who, under peculiar circumstances, had no alternative except to touch money. In the days of persecution it became a necessity for the Friars to do so, and at the present day, apart from infidel countries where the Friars are sent as missionaries, there is in the Order a Commissary-general for the Holy Land, appointed by the Pope to receive the alms of the faithful, one in a thousand who is sacrificed for the public good; for it is a known fact, that large sums are formed of many pennies, and it is to the poor we may look for unfailing pence. The son of St. Francis, possessing nothing, is above the suspicion of self-seeking or interest. In begging for what his rule forbids him to touch, he has ever been the most popular collector amongst the people, and has, for this reason, always been chosen when possible by the Holy See.



the disputed question of the Nicene Creed, which was dividing the Greek Church. In his Bull, the holy Father speaks of the Friars,<sup>48</sup> as “*Men eminent for religion and virtue, noted for their good lives, as well as for their great learning and knowledge in the Holy Scripture.*”

Brother Nicholas Anglicus was confessor to Innocent IV., and afterwards elected Bishop of Assisi; Alexander of Hales was one of the same Pope's canonists and assistants at the council of Lyons, in 1245. Alexander of Hales, the master of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, of Brother Ware, the master of Duns Scotus, is one of the glories of the Order in England. He was born at Hales in Gloucestershire, near a famous Cistercian Abbey, where he received his first lessons. After having studied some time at Oxford, he went to Paris, and was made Doctor of Divinity of that University and Regius Professor. He was in the full enjoyment of his honours, when, at the voice of a poor Franciscan lay-brother, he renounced everything, and entered the Order.<sup>49</sup> After his profession, he gave himself up chiefly to preaching and the preparation of the *Summa Theologica*, which served as the basis of the marvellous *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, and from which St. Bonaventure borrowed much. Alexander of Hales<sup>50</sup> was the first author who

<sup>48</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.*, p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> P. Civezza, *Storia delle Franciscane*, T. vii., p. 499.

<sup>50</sup> Father Antoninus, the Dominican author before quoted, gives the following account of Alexander's vocation to the Franciscan Order. “He was a famous doctor of Paris, and renowned throughout the world; and out of an extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, had engaged himself with a firm purpose, never to refuse anything in his power that should be asked in her name. Now a certain devout matron, (by what means I know not,) coming to the knowledge of this, and being much affected to the Carmelites and the Dominicans, told some of the former the secret, bidding them go to the Dr. Halensis and ask him, for the

turned the syllogistical method of arguing against the Arab philosophers of the day, and who, following the example of Peter Lombard, ventured to write in the

glorious Virgin Mary's sake to enter into their Order, assuring them that the doctor would grant their request. The White Friars were surprised at the thing, considering the man, and the elevated station he was in; but relying on the matron, they go to the doctor, who received them with all the marks of civility imaginable; they discoursed with him on many heads, and then returned home, not once so much as remembering the business they came thither for. The good lady took this for an affront, so she let the Dominicans into the secret, who soon went privately to the doctor, first discoursing with him about indifferent matters, that they might at last usher in their address in a more courtly manner; when behold, in comes a Friar Minor, with his wallet on his shoulder, having been begging bread about the town for his brethren, and being now come hither also to beg, he fixed his eyes on the doctor as he sat talking with the Dominicans, and simply addressed him as follows: "Reverend doctor, you are a very great scholar, and the fame of your virtue and learning is spread far and near; you see the poor Order of Friars Minor has as yet but few learned men in it, and no doctors; if you were in it, many persons would improve by your means; and therefore, I beseech you, for the love of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, that you will take upon you the habit of our Order, for the good of your soul and for the honour of our Institute." The Dominicans were amazed to see themselves thus prevented, and the doctor himself at first seemed to be in a consternation; but at last recovering himself and taking the words of the simple brother to be a call from God he made this reply: "Go your ways brother, for I will follow you presently, and will comply with your request." Thus did this great Alexander bid adieu to the world, to shroud himself under the penitential weed of a Friar Minor. Being afterwards tempted to leave this hard Institute and habit, and to return to his former state, St. Francis appeared to him in his sleep carrying a heavy wooden cross on his shoulders, and labouring hard to climb up a steep hill with it; which when the doctor beheld, he was filled with tender compassion, and offered his service to bear a part of the burden, but was rejected with these or like words of indignation: "Go, go, thou poor wretch, thou art not able to bear a light cross of cloth, and wilt thou offer to carry a heavy one of wood?" By which reproach the doctor was both roused up to a greater fervour and encouraged to persevere in his vocation, which he did to the end of his life." (*Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 54.)

simple, concise style adopted by the two greatest men of the age, Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas. The Angelic Doctor, on being asked what was the best way to study theology, used to answer: "In following chiefly one Doctor—Alexander of Hales."<sup>51</sup> This *Summa*, which fills four volumes, was approved by Alexander IV.,<sup>52</sup> and

<sup>51</sup> Conti, *Storia della Filosofia*, vol. ii.

<sup>52</sup> Bull of Alexander IV. "To our well-beloved son the Provincial of the Friars Minor in France. The river flowing from the fountains of Paradise, to wit, the exuberant understanding of the Sacred Scriptures by the mouth of Brother Alexander of your Order, has, in our own time, rushed with an abundant stream over the earth, bringing into fuller light the treasures of science and salutary wisdom. Indeed, the same Brother, as we have found from his writings, filled with the Spirit of God, (for no one unless speaking by the Spirit of God, would have attained by curious enquiry to those mysteries of eternal truth) adapted his studies to public utility, and undertaking in his holy purpose to labour on theological questions, produced a *Summa*, more useful than prolix, for the profit of those who might wish to study the law of God in a more compendious manner. In this are arranged irrefragable sentences for crushing, by the weight of truth, the obstinacy of contentious falsehood. And if any reader find such a *Summa* prolix, by your constant studies, use makes its various parts so short, that in such a mass of words which seems to us to contain vast eloquence of divine depth, we can reasonably be offended at nothing, except the imperfections caused by the death of the author before the completion of his work; hence what he has written appears little and insufficient to satisfy the mind, unless the completion of so great an undertaking should follow . . . Therefore we entrust to your discretion, and in virtue of obedience give a strict charge, that considering what is left imperfect, in a work so eloquently begun by heavenly wisdom, through the ministry of His servant, you shall take counsel with the Discretory and select as many Brothers as may be necessary for the purpose and call them together at Paris, from the different places of your Order, and give them on our part indulgences and increase of merit, that diligently assisting our beloved son, William de Militona, deputed for this cause, and helping him and themselves mutually, they may complete the above said *Summa* without delay, the one and same Spirit of the Lord, Who distributes freely the wonderful gifts of science, giving them His assistance. Given at Agnani, the 28th of July, in the second year of our Pontificate. (P. Civezza, *Storia*, vol. vii., p. 1., p. 500.)

was highly recommended to all Universities. Alexander of Hales likewise wrote a learned treatise on the Immaculate Conception, and many other works. He was one of the great supporters of strict poverty, chosen with two other English friars, Richard Middleton and Geoffrey Fountains, to draw up the exposition of the Rule, received by the General Chapter, at Bologna in 1242. He died at Paris, in 1245, leaving behind him the memory of a perfect religious, distinguished for his great purity, his love of poverty, his prompt obedience, and deep humility.

Brother Haymo of Faversham, fifth General of the Order, was born in Kent, and was a renowned preacher when he entered the Order in 1225. "One, day whilst praying before the crucifix, in his oratory at Faversham, he had a vision of a cord, descending from Heaven, which he, eagerly receiving and holding fast, was by it drawn up into Heaven. Like most other Englishmen of the time, before the Franciscans were masters of the Universities, he went abroad, to perfect himself in study. The many austerities he had practised as parish priest, had reduced him to such a state of debility, that he could hardly digest ordinary food, but on seeing the Friars Minor, for the first time, he remembered his vision. At the same time his strength seemed to return, and gathering up all his courage, he induced three other learned Doctors to join with him in earnest prayer, and whilst he offered the Holy Sacrifice to ask of God to make known to them what would most conduce to their salvation. All being agreed to enter the Franciscan Order, they, for greater security, went and laid their case before the holy Dominican, Father Jordan, and begged of him conscientiously to advise them. He confirming their decision, they went to the Provincial, Brother Gregory of Naples, and were by him received in the church of St. Denis in Paris, which



the Friars then used, having at that time no choir of their own.”<sup>53</sup> One of Brother Haymo’s first acts, after he became a Friar, was to preach an Easter sermon, which so stirred up the hearts of his hearers, that many deferred their communion, and he spent the three following days in hearing confessions.<sup>54</sup> The author leaves it uncertain if this occurred in France or in England. It is certain, however, that Brother Haymo laboured in England, before he was made guardian of Paris and Professor at Bologna and Padua. In 1239, he was made Provincial of England, and was elected General, at the General Chapter held at Rome, on the first of November in the same year, at which Gregory IX. presided. He was commissioned, by the Holy Father, to draw up the rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal, and correct the Breviary itself.<sup>55</sup> He received St. Bonaventure into the Order, and excluded the lay-brothers from being guardians, an office, which, in the scarcity of subjects in founding new Provinces, they had sometimes discharged. It was he who ordered the exposition of the Rule of St. Francis, approved in 1242, to be drawn up by four learned doctors of the Order. He is the author of several books, and died, in the fifth year of his generalship, at Agnani in Italy, 1244. In his last illness he was visited by Innocent IV.<sup>56</sup>

Roger Bacon entered the Order in 1234. He was already a distinguished scholar and a fellow of Merton College, Oxford. His early studies had been directed by St. Edmund of Canterbury.<sup>57</sup> The Franciscan School at

<sup>53</sup> Eccleston, *De Adventu Minorum*, chap. v.

<sup>54</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>55</sup> The Roman Breviary, as corrected and arranged by Haymo of Faverham, already in use in the Pope’s chapel and in the Order, was ordered to be used in the whole Church by Nicholas III., elected Pope in 1277.

<sup>56</sup> *Collectan. Angl. Min.*, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup> Elected Archbishop 1234, died 1244. Canonized by Innocent IV.

Oxford was still in its infancy, and Roger Bacon proceeded to Paris, where he applied himself to the study of Divinity, Oriental Languages, Physics, Mathematics and Civil and Canon Law, with such marvellous success that he was made Doctor of Divinity of the University, where the name *Doctor Mirabilis* was given him.

His experiments and discoveries, whilst they drew the whole University to his Lectures, were looked upon by many as the result of magic and unholy dealings with the spirit of darkness, and he was accused of sorcery, to the General of the Order. He was ordered to remain in some Friary not named<sup>58</sup> till the matter could be examined into. But Roger Bacon who knew the justice of his own cause humbly sent his mathematical instruments and papers to Clement IV. 1267, by John of London his most promising and devoted pupil. In his letter to the Holy Father, Brother Roger speaks very highly both of the abilities and of the holiness of life of his messenger. The Pope was perfectly satisfied, "*perceiving that Friar Bacon had been wronged, and that it was a misfortune for him to be more penetrating than the common rank of Doctors,*"<sup>59</sup> and bestowed marks of his approval on both master and disciple. Roger Bacon died at Oxford in 1292, and was buried in the

<sup>58</sup> Supposed to be London.

<sup>59</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 112. Thomas Bungey, who died in 1290, was by no means a stranger to Bacon's discoveries. He was himself a doctor of Oxford, public professor at both the English Universities, and a great mathematician. He was also accused by the ignorant of sorcery, but he was in high esteem in the Order, of which he was the eleventh or twelfth Provincial of England.<sup>1</sup> Some authors erroneously assert that Roger Bacon was again imprisoned under Nicholas IV., and died in prison, others, that his cause was submitted to Innocent IV., but in both cases there is a confusion of dates. The same objection applies to the story, quoted by some authors, of his rebuking Henry III. in a sermon.

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *Antiquit. Oxon.*, T. i., p. 23, 136.

Church of the Order.<sup>60</sup> The same year that Roger Bacon entered the Order the Friars settled at Coventry. A protestant author of no mean repute tells us :<sup>61</sup>

“These Franciscans were in a short time spread over the whole Christian world, possessing nothing, but merely living by the gospel. In food and raiment they manifested their voluntary poverty, and going barefoot, girt with a knotted cord, gave the greatest example of humility imaginable. When they first settled at Coventry they had no charter of foundation for their house there, nor, indeed, any formal Grant in writing of the place whereon it stood ; which is no wonder, considering that not being endowed with lands they lived wholly on the charity of others, as we see those beyond the sea do now at this day, going constantly by couples with wallets on their shoulders to receive alms, and as for their habitation here with the Church, it is certain the structure of both was wholly made at the cost of good people, so great a respect did the world in those days bear towards them by reason of their devout and austere lives.”

Edward the Black Prince granted the Friars at Coventry a free access to his park through a private door, for the benefit of the sick and infirm. In the Church, the steeple of which was still standing, in the seventeenth century, many of the house of Huntingdon<sup>62</sup> lay buried, “*some in the very habit of Friars Minor.*”<sup>63</sup> The author quoted does not explain if this refers to the Third Order. Probably not, for it is a singular feature in the history of the English Franciscan Province, that the Third Order

<sup>60</sup> Wood, as quoted by F. Parkinson, *Collect. Angl. Min.*, Pt. ii., p. 34.

<sup>61</sup> Dugdale's *History of Warwickshire*, p. 113, 115, printed 1656.

<sup>62</sup> In the church was a chapel called “Hastings' Chapel,” Hastings being the former name of the Earls of Huntingdon ; their arms, with those of the Cantilupes,<sup>1</sup> Valences,<sup>2</sup> and Spencers, were represented in the windows of this chapel.

<sup>63</sup> *Antiq. of Warwickshire*, p. 115.

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas of Hereford was a Cantilupe.

Earl of Pembroke.

has no part in it. There is one solitary mention of it in 1256, during the Provincialship of Peter of Tewkesbury, when we find the "Third Order of St. Francis discountenanced for some time, again restored in a Provincial Chapter in London."<sup>64</sup> This is the more remarkable from the fact that the Friars themselves were popular with all classes. When Brother Agnellus placed his schools under the leading man of the day, and did his utmost to form a body of men, who might direct and form the minds of their fellow men, he had already in the first few months clearly taken in the mission of the Order in England. Science and learning were to be one of the means by which he would draw to the Franciscans all that was best and noblest, to aid directly or indirectly, in the great work of the regeneration of society. It would have been perfectly useless for those who could not minister to all the spiritual and bodily needs of the populations of the English towns of the thirteenth century to attempt to gain them.

In studying the history of the Order in Europe, it must be borne in mind that the Franciscans were essentially the missionaries of the towns. The country populations enjoyed all the benefit of the Monasteries which were scattered all over the land, but the towns, the refuge of the old English Thanes, of the outlaw, and the discontented vassal, were singularly destitute. Sheltered within their city walls, the citizens could defy the feudal lord they hated, and could live in proud independence. When the Friars came to England, the civil wars of the late reign had reduced the nation to great misery. On all sides there was a spirit of self-assertion and distrust. The towns, after obtaining privileges from the Crown as a protection against the Barons, had united with the Barons

<sup>64</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara., *Hist. Min.*, p. 16. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 65.



to wring civil liberty from the Crown. The general feeling towards Henry III. was by no means one of loyalty. Their new social importance made the townsmen jealous of their rights, and they held themselves aloof, especially from the clergy. But the increased communication between east and west, while it advanced the interests of commerce and civilization, had opened the road to oriental luxury, tastes, sciences, and modes of thought, and with them the moral and physical diseases of the East.<sup>65</sup> There was a growing spirit of doubt and enquiry, fostered by the eastern philosophy propagated by the Arab writers, whose ideas harmonized with the increasing luxury of the age, and whose sophistry puzzled yet charmed and fascinated the ignorant. The utter detachment of the Friars, their perfect renouncing of the world and all manner of property, enabled them first to reach those who had come to distrust the secular clergy, as the possible agents of king or lord to exact some new tax.<sup>66</sup> The poorest could not turn from those who by profession honoured poverty. The leper, that outcast of society, had found a friend in those who, if they could not cure his malady, were bound to tend and help him. Their lives, the living embodiment of what they taught, appealed to the hearts of those they lived amongst. The men trained in the school of Adam of Marisco, of Alexander Hales, of Roger Bacon, could refute in simple language the errors the merchant too often picked up in his travels,

<sup>65</sup> Dr. Brewer's Preface to *Monumenta Franciscana*, as quoted in P. Civezza's *Storia delle Franciscane*, p. 496.

<sup>66</sup> Francis of Sta. Clara states that Henry III., on one occasion, sent the Friars a cart-load of gray woollen cloth, suitable for their habits, but they, learning it had been wrested from some merchants, returned it, refusing firmly though humbly to accept what had been procured by the oppression of the subject. *Hist. Min.*, p. 18.

or evolved out of his own half grounded religious convictions. The study of medicine, pursued that the cure of the soul might follow that of the body, was encouraged, and it involved the study of natural philosophy. This, again, made the Friar welcome with the mercantile class. Chemistry, though under a different form and name, was engrossing the minds of many. The Friar who was familiar with the art of distillation, with the use of the laboratory, was on the high road to the confidence of the merchant or scholar, who would have shrunk from exposing the wounds of his soul to one unable to solve his natural difficulties. But it was above all by their preaching that the Friars won the multitudes. Their own deep studies, resulting in the perfect mastery of all difficulties, led to that simplicity of style which is the result of hard labour and profound knowledge. The mysteries of the Life and Death of our Lord, were vividly brought home to the hearts of the hearers, impressed or illustrated by some anecdote which gave them a practical connection with the trials and duties of daily life. The Friary of Coventry was celebrated in connection with the miracle plays,<sup>67</sup> enacted there during the octave of Corpus Christi. At the time when books were rare and reading comparatively unknown, the drama, though in a rude form, had a part in the education and elevation of men's minds it has lost in its polished form, in our own day. These Coventry plays were famed far and near and were much resorted to. They were sacred representations of scenes from the Old and New Testament, acted under the direction of the Friars in different parts of the city.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> These plays, composed in old English rhyme, called *Ludus Coventriae*, form part of the Cotton MS.

<sup>68</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, Appendix, p. 34.

Baliol College at Oxford,<sup>69</sup> Queen's College<sup>70</sup> and Pembroke Hall<sup>71</sup> at Cambridge, were also founded through the Friars' influence. In 1272, two of the four Franciscans, sent to Constantinople by Gregory X. to treat of the reconciliation of the Greek Church, were Englishmen. Two Archbishops of Canterbury,—Robert Kirwarby,<sup>72</sup> consecrated in 1272,<sup>73</sup> and John Peckham, consecrated 1278,—belonged to the Order. Robert Kirwarby was born in England, and was famous for the holiness of his life, as well as for his learning.<sup>74</sup> He was sent to Paris to finish his studies, and afterwards taught there. On his return he entered the Order, and became professor and doctor of divinity at Oxford. He was shortly afterwards elected Provincial. He devoted much time to the study of the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers, especially St. Augustine, whose works he divided into short chapters,

<sup>69</sup> Founded, 1266, by John de Baliol, father of the King of Scots. The statutes obliged the scholars to have three Masses said yearly for the repose of the founder's soul.

<sup>70</sup> Founded by Margaret of Anjou, completed by Elisabeth, wife of Edward IV.

<sup>71</sup> Founded by the Countess of Pembroke, in Edward III.'s reign. This same lady founded an abbey of Poor Clares at Denney, near Cambridge. (*Collect. Angl. Min.*, Appendix, p. 3.)

<sup>72</sup> Bale, Pits, and Wood assert that Dr. Kirwarby was a Dominican. There is, however, ample reason to suppose that Parker, Godwyn, Isaacson and Francis of Sta. Clara and others, had solid grounds for saying he belonged to the Franciscan Order. It is true that in the list of Provincials given in Mason's *Certamen Seraphicum*, his name is wanting, but the said list is far from perfect. Dr. Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, in his *Prudential Balance*, p. 220, says: "He was a Franciscan Friar as Godwyn rightly says, and Bale wrongly makes him a Dominican." It is certain that, when Archbishop, he built the second Franciscan Friary in London, at Smithfield. Collier, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, also makes him a Franciscan, adding, that he founded a Dominican Monastery at Salisbury, as well as the Minorite House in London, (*Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 88—89.)

<sup>73</sup> Godwyn's *Catalogue of Bishops*. <sup>74</sup> Matthew of Paris, *Hist.*, p. 1348.

making a few remarks at the end, on the doctrine contained in each chapter.<sup>75</sup> After occupying the See of Canterbury for six years, he was, in 1277, summoned to Rome by Nicholas III., and made Cardinal of Ostia, and, after resigning his Archbishopric, Bishop of Porto in Italy. He died soon afterwards at Viterbo.

John Peckham was born in Sussex, and received his first education from the Cluniac monks of the Abbey of Lewes. These good religious, perceiving the great gifts of their pupil, sent him to Oxford, where they supported him till he entered the Franciscan Order. After his profession he was sent to Paris, where, under the direction of St. Bonaventure, he made rapid progress in holiness and learning. On his return to Oxford, he was made Doctor of Divinity and succeeded Brother Thomas Bungey as Regius Professor. Returning to Paris, he was made a Doctor of that University; here, as at Oxford, he was the strenuous opponent of certain new and suspected opinions then creeping into the schools. He was called back to England to attend a Chapter of the Order, and unanimously elected Provincial. In 1278, being summoned to a General Chapter of the Order held at Padua, he visited all the noted Universities of Italy, and his fame spreading to the Vatican, Nicholas III. sent for him to Rome, and, after causing him to resign his Provincialship, appointed him *Reader of the Sacred Palace*. His religious demeanour and profound learning, so charmed the Roman Court, that Cardinals and Bishops and other dignitaries flocked to his Lectures.<sup>76</sup> In 1279 the Holy Father made him Archbishop of Canterbury, setting aside the Bishop of Bath who had been elected

<sup>75</sup> *Remarks on St. Augustine's Works*, MSS. in St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and *Summaries of every little chapter of St. Augustine's Works*, MSS. *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 83.



by the Chapter of Canterbury, on learning Dr. Kirwarby's resignation. One of his first acts as Archbishop was to convoke the Synod of Reading, in which the Canons of the Council of Lyons about the plurality of benefices, were put in force. He himself waged an unceasing war against the existing abuses of plurality and non-residence. At the Synod of Lambeth, held in 1281, he gave his clergy a written, clear, and simple explanation of the mysteries of faith, the ten commandments, the seven sacraments and works of mercy, exhorting them to preach on these subjects. He visited every diocese in England, examining into and reforming whatever needed reform, and consecrating many churches. He reproved the king for depriving the Abbey of Westminster and other monasteries of their ancient privileges. As Provincial, he had governed the Order with uncommon prudence and zeal for the strict observance of the Rule, giving, himself, a striking example of penance and holy poverty. He used to visit the Province on foot, and his journeys to France and Italy, except in crossing the sea, were also accomplished on foot. *Knowing himself to be placed as an example, he avoided even things lawful, for fear of an appearance even, of what was imperfect,* and, as Primate of all England, he never allowed himself the least indulgence, suffering hunger in the midst of plenty.<sup>77</sup> He was appointed Protector of the Franciscan Order in England by the Holy See, at a moment when several complaints, dictated by jealousy, were being brought against the Friars, on account of the number of eminent men, and religious of other Orders, whom they admitted into their ranks, and of their preaching and hearing confessions in so many places. The Archbishop published the Bull of Alexander

<sup>77</sup> *Franciscan Martyrologium*, p. 159., April the twenty-fourth.

IV.,<sup>78</sup> granted in 1257, by which full power was given to the English Friars to preach, and hear the confessions of lay persons of either sex. He declared that all who opposed these privileges should be severely reprimanded, and desired the Chancellor of the University to silence all who preached against the Franciscans, and to make known to all, that, in receiving into their Order those who were already professed in others, the Friars only acted in accordance with the permission of the Holy See. Dr. Peckham died in 1292, and was buried at Canterbury, near the shrine of St. Thomas. His heart, however, was, by his express wish, sent to the Franciscans in London and placed near the High Altar in their church.<sup>79</sup>

Amongst other works, he composed an office of the Most Holy Trinity,<sup>80</sup> and collected into one volume the Statutes

<sup>78</sup> There were, at this period, certain *Concordats* between the Holy See and the Sovereigns of England, amongst which one was, that no Bull or Brief from the Pope should have its full force and effect in England, before it was examined by some bishops in spiritual respects, and the sheriffs of the respective counties in civil respects, who were to give their verdict that the said Bull or other writing whatsoever, contained nothing prejudicial to the King's prerogative or the rights of the nation and people, before it could be pleaded as a law; after which verdict, the bench of Judges again examined it in their tribunals respectively, and accordingly gave their opinion thereof, as appears in the register under Edward I. and others of the kings of these times. This Bull of Alexander IV., in favour of the Franciscans, had not been as yet viewed by any bishop and royal counsellor, in such manner as was requisite for its legal publication, and therefore it was upon this occasion read by Archbishop Peckham, and, being judged to be no way derogatory to the King's prerogative or the rights of the kingdom, it was published in due form, being subscribed by the Archbishop Primate's own hand. Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.* p. 14, 15. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 85, 86. Francis à Sta. Clara gives this Bull at full length in his *Manuale Missionarium Regularium*, chap. xi., p. 77, 78, 79. <sup>79</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.* p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> This office, approved by the Holy See, was for many years used wherever the Roman Breviary was followed.

of Synods and Provincial Constitutions from the beginning of the Church; the first work of the kind ever published.

But the glory of the Franciscan Order in England is Duns Scotus, the "Subtle Doctor" as he is termed, to whom the whole Church owes a lasting debt of gratitude.<sup>81</sup> From the day of his triumph in the great controversy of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, then rife amongst the Schoolmen, the leading Universities and theological schools of Europe,<sup>82</sup> with Paris at their head bound their members by a solemn oath to teach and to defend the Immaculate Conception.

Duns Scotus was born in Northumberland and as a child was a stupid and indocile pupil.<sup>83</sup> But from his earliest years he was most devout to our Blessed Lady. To Her he confided the troubles arising from his dulness and slowness, and begged God through Her intercession

<sup>81</sup> The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception had been believed in the Church long before the controversy arose which rendered Duns Scotus so famous. But, although the yearly feast was established, the mystery itself was the source of much argument, the Church not yet having definitely defined the dogma. The question had been raised, "*How could Mary have been redeemed, if she had never been under sin?*" Albertus Magnus and his followers maintained "*that our Blessed Lady was conceived in original sin, though sanctified in her mother's womb, while many other doctors maintained she was preserved from that stain of general infection by a special privilege, on the foresight of the merits of Christ, Whom she was to bear.*" The debate grew so warm, that it was judged necessary to put an end to it by a public disputation. It was reserved to Duns Scotus to show with all his eloquence, and the acuteness of his intellect, that our Lady's perfect exemption from all taint of original sin, at the very first moment of her conception, was the master-piece of the redemption operated on Calvary.

<sup>82</sup> When the New World was discovered, the Universities of Lima and Mexico took the same oath.

<sup>83</sup> *Franciscan Martyrologium*, November the eighth.

to enlighten his understanding. Our Lady appeared to him in his sleep and encouraged him to persevere, promising to grant his request. As he grew up he became full of intellectual vigour, with unusual powers of application, and was soon so quick of apprehension that he was sent early to Merton College Oxford, where he became the wonder of the age, and was chosen Fellow of his College. On his return home his thoughts turned to the Franciscan Order and he entered the Friary of Newcastle. After his profession he was sent again to Oxford and under the guidance of William Ware,<sup>84</sup> became a doctor and professor of Divinity. He was only twenty-four when he attained these dignities, and he was already so esteemed as a Lecturer, that all the ancient doctors and Professors flocked to hear him. In the middle of this brilliant career the General of the whole Order sent for him, and placed him at Paris, where he became Professor and regent of studies, and, after his public victory in our Lady's cause, Doctor of Divinity. He was subsequently sent to Cologne to defend the Immaculate Conception. Amidst all his fame Duns Scotus remained a humble fervent friar. When the obedience to go to Cologne reached him, he was walking with some of the many companions who sought his society, and he immediately left them and set out, answering those who pressed him to delay a few hours, with these words: "Pardon me, if I seem to act against good manners, but this letter bids me go to Cologne, not to return to the house." At Cologne he opened a school which was

<sup>84</sup> William Ware or Varro was a Franciscan, Doctor of Divinity and Professor, both at Oxford and Paris. He is one of the fifteen doctors whose names are engraven on the brass plates round Scotus' tomb in the old Franciscan church at Cologne. His deep studies in Aristotle and in Christian philosophy earned him the name of the "*grounded doctor*." Pic of Mirandola calls him "a lamp of the Church."



soon filled. He was the first founder of the University of that city,<sup>85</sup> where he ended his life of labour in 1308, at the early age of thirty-four, and was buried in the Church of his Order. Of the fifteen doctors whose names are engraven round his tomb, six are Englishmen, and it was the English nation which preserved his numerous works, and first published them in print, without any charge to the Order in 1474, ten years after printing was introduced into England.<sup>86</sup> The English Franciscans were the first to write commentaries upon his works which with those of St. Bonaventure's, and perhaps even more than St. Bonaventure, have become the basis of the Franciscan Schools of Divinity and Philosophy.<sup>87</sup>

William Occham, the pupil of Scotus and later on his great antagonist in the schools, stands out in sad and striking contrast to his master.<sup>88</sup> His learning, and pro-

<sup>85</sup> *Martyrologium* November the eighth. The University, however, was not completely established till 1388.

<sup>86</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 134.

<sup>87</sup> Duns Scotus has left behind him a reputation of sanctity as great as his learning. No man was more disengaged from the world, or more truly poor in spirit, none more scrupulously obedient, none more chaste, more humble, more forward in the practice of watching, fasting, and other mortifications and penitential austerities; none more fervent and assiduous in prayer, none more zealous and ready to contribute to the salvation of his neighbour. All his writings breathe humility and a submissive disposition; his lowly sentiments of himself appear in his manner of treating of the highest mysteries of the Christian faith. He was favoured with heavenly apparitions, for on a certain Christmas night, as he was meditating on the Mystery of the Incarnation, our Lord appeared to him in the form of a tender Infant. Many miracles are related of him. *Martyrologium*, No v. 8. *Collect. Ang. Min.* p. 131.

<sup>88</sup> Occham was the founder of the Nominalist School of Philosophy, as Duns Scotus was of the Realist. The former maintained that general ideas have no real existence, except that which they borrow from the intelligence; whilst the latter maintained that general ideas have indeed their existence in the intelligence but *cum fundamento in re*.

found knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which won him the titles of the “*singular*,” and the “*unparalleled*” Doctor, caused him to be at one time held in such esteem in his Order that he was chosen Provincial of England, and subsequently appointed Definitor General of the whole Order. But Occham was wanting in those religious virtues which were the glory of the greatest men of the Order in England. At the General Chapter held at Avignon in 1325, he forgot his duty to the Vicar of Christ, and finally fled from Avignon after promising to remain there to await the Pope’s orders. He placed himself under the protection of the Emperor of Germany, and using his pen in no measured terms was excommunicated. Brother Richard Connington the English Provincial together with all his brethren, rebuked him sternly for his rebellious conduct to the highest authority on earth, to which the whole Order of St. Francis was bound to be obedient.<sup>89</sup> Occham died penitent at Munich in 1347.

The nineteenth General of the Order, who distinguished himself during his Generalship, by his great zeal for the pure observance of the rule was born in Wales. Sertor Walleys,<sup>90</sup> better known as Vassal Fontanier was a Friar of

<sup>89</sup> The question at issue was the interpretation made by the Order of a Decree of Nicolas III., in his declaration upon the Rule of St. Francis. Occham was carried away by his zeal for the observance of his Rule, but during the whole controversy the English Franciscans gave evidence of their humble submission to the Holy See.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>90</sup> The Abbot Trithemius, who lived about a hundred years after Sertorius Walleys, says: “whom some call Fontanierus,” the nineteenth Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, by nation an Englishman, by country Welsh, afterwards Archbishop of Ravenna, then Patriarch of Grado, and at last Cardinal of the Roman Church, commonly styled, the *Enlightened Doctor*.<sup>2</sup> Wadding disputes his nationality, but Harpsfield. Bale, Fuller, Francis à Sta. Clara, Mason,<sup>3</sup> and others, agree with Trithemius.

<sup>1</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.* p. 9.  
*Certamen Seraphicum*, p. 280; *Collect. Angl. Min.* p. 17.

*Ibid*, p. 171.

singular prudence and learning. He was professed at the Friary of Gorgone in what was then called Aquitaine,<sup>91</sup> in France, and was made a Doctor of Divinity of Paris in 1333. In 1342 he was made Vicar General of the whole Order, and at the General Chapter held at Marseilles the following year, was chosen General of the Order by the wish of the Holy Father, Clement VI. As General he obtained the confirmation of St. Bonaventura's Constitutions, and the revocation of the relaxations granted by Benedict XII.

In 1347, he was appointed Archbishop of Ravenna and resigned the Generalship at the General Chapter held at Verona the following year. He was twice employed as Legate by Clement VI., being sent to Sicily, and to negotiate peace between the republics of Venice and Genoa. On this latter occasion, he gave such marks of his prud-

<sup>91</sup> Aquitane at this time was in the possession of the English, and many English Friars were sent to the Friaries founded by the kings of England. St. Edward's Friary at Bordeaux, so named in honour of the Confessor, was built by Edward III. In a charter dated at Westminster, 1338, the same king bestows weekly alms, revocable at his will and pleasure, to the Friary of St. Macharius. A second charter dated July 12, anno. 1348, continues the alms, and gives express orders for paying up the arrears. A third renews the alms, "in consideration of the great poverty of that country occasioned by the wars."<sup>1</sup> *Libourne* was built by Edward I., in 1287.<sup>2</sup> *La Reole*<sup>3</sup> was enriched by the kings of England, with many religious houses besides its Friary. Henry III. expended vast sums of money there. *Mount Fernand* was built by an English gentleman as early as 1236, and *Condom* by the Earl of Condom, in 1291.

The fact that Br. Sertor Wallensis belonged to the Province of Aquitaine has doubtless given rise to the supposition that he was born in that province. It must be remembered that it was the common practice of the General Superiors, in the early ages of the Order, to send for the English Friars and to employ them as Professors and often as Provincials in foreign provinces.

<sup>1</sup> Stephen's *Monasticon*, Appendix, vol. ii., p. 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Suppl. Hist. Min.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Min.* p. 29.

ence and virtues that he was made Patriarch of Grado, in the Venetian Territories. He reduced the Flaminians to the obedience of the Holy See, and was created Cardinal by Innocent VI., in 1361. He died the same year at Padua on his way to join the Holy Father at Avignon.

The great mathematician and discoverer, Brother Nicholas of Lynn<sup>92</sup> was a Franciscan.<sup>93</sup> He wrote the first description of the North Sea ever published, wherein he describes the Maëlstrom till then unknown. The account of his discoveries was dedicated to Edward III., under the title of "Inventio Fortunata." He died at Lynn 1360.

Pope Alexander V. O.M. (1409) although an Italian<sup>94</sup> by birth, studied at Oxford for several years. He was professor of divinity at the Friary of that city,<sup>95</sup> and Bachelor of the University.

Two Lord Chief-Justices of England, William Schars-hill in 1386, and N. Clopton in 1426, resigned their office to enter the Order. In 1441, Henry VI. petitioned the Holy See that he might have some of the Friars about the Court in order to send them to negotiate important and delicate missions with other Princes, a request Eugenius IV. granted.

But it would be impossible in a short space to give the details of the life and labours of even all the distinguished Friars who belonged to what was once one of the fairest Provinces of the Order, and which has given to the Church, forty-four Archbishops and Bishops, one hundred and ninety celebrated Scholastic Professors, five or six Chancellors of the Universities, one Lord Lieutenant of

<sup>92</sup> Lynn in Norfolk.

<sup>93</sup> *Hist. Min.*, p. 31. Bale makes him a Carmelite, an error followed by others. (*Antiq. Min.*, pp. 169, 170.)

<sup>94</sup> *Tossinianensis Hist. Seraph.* L. 2, Folio 207.

<sup>95</sup> *Antiq. Oxon.* p. 77.



Ireland,<sup>96</sup> two Generals, two Definitors General, one hundred and fourteen celebrated writers, besides ninety men of remarkable holiness, and one hundred and fifty-two martyrs; still more impossible to collect the details of the hundreds who gave their lives but whose names are written only in the Book of Life.

One Bishop, and three or more Abbots resigned their mitres, and severals Lords and Barons their Coronets to enter the Order.

Throughout the length and breadth of England the habit of St. Francis was loved and respected, throughout the whole world the fame of the English Province was spread, when the storm of persecution burst upon this country, and the Friars reaped the highest reward of three hundred years of fidelity to their vocation, and the glory of being the first to shed their blood for the truth to which their lives had daily witnessed during those three centuries of prosperity.

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<sup>96</sup> The history of the Irish Province is a distinct chapter in the history of the Order, and one which can show bright pages. At one time there were three or four houses in Ireland depending on the English Province, and in its infancy the Irish Province itself was governed by an English Provincial.<sup>1</sup> Br. Richard Ingeworth was at one time their Provincial.

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<sup>1</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Suppl. Hist. Min. Ant. Min.* 104.

## PART X.

THE earlier part of Henry VIII.'s reign gave little warning of the storm which was so soon to sweep over one of the fairest Provinces of the Order. The king's confessor,<sup>1</sup> for nearly ten years, was Brother Stephen Baron, Provincial<sup>2</sup> in 1520. Catharine of Aragon was a fervent Tertiary, and whenever the Court was at Greenwich, she assisted at the Divine Office in the Friary Church.

The first public sign of royal displeasure was shown in a letter written by the King in 1532, to the General of the whole Order, Brother Paul Pissotus, in which :

“For the sake of peace and good agreement between His Majesty and the Observants in his Kingdom, Henry desired that the English Provincial of that Order might be turned out of his office, and that the said General would send, as his commissary and minister in the other's place, one John de Haye of the Province of Flanders, whom the king knew and liked.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Fragmenta Prov. Angl.*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> The order of succession of the Provincials about this time is very difficult to follow, inasmuch as after the General Chapter held at Burgos, in 1523, the names of the English Provincials only appear twice in the General Chapters held during Henry VIII.'s reign. Francis à Sta. Clara and Mason, the two most contemporary writers, agree that Br. Stephen Baron was Provincial in 1520, and was succeeded by Br. William N——, who was made Definitor General of the Order at the General Chapter of Burgos. He was succeeded by Bl. John Forest, the last regularly elected Provincial of the first Province founded by Br. Agnellus.

<sup>3</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 227.

The question of the divorce had been raised some four years previously, and was then still under discussion.<sup>4</sup> The Friars had roused Henry's anger by openly preaching and writing against his unlawful proceedings, and the Provincial Blessed John Forest;<sup>5</sup> was held responsible for the many arguments the members of the Order fearlessly brought forward, to prove the lawfulness of Henry's marriage with Queen Catharine. In 1533, the definite sentence against the divorce came from Rome, and Blessed Forest was cast into prison,<sup>6</sup> partly as a warning to the Friars, to show them what they might expect if they dared to resist the royal pleasure, but chiefly because he was Catharine's Confessor, and the King attributed her refusal to resign her title of Queen and retire to a convent to Blessed Forest's advice and encouragement.<sup>7</sup>

The first to publicly reprove the King for his repudiation of his lawful Queen was Brother Peto, Guardian of

<sup>4</sup> It is not the province of the present work to enter into the details of the reign of Henry VIII. The facts which are inseparably mixed up with the history of the Order are simply mentioned in their place without any reference to their bearing either on the general history of the Reformation or of England. It may not, however, be out of place to add here that Henry was particularly anxious to win the Friars to his side. Their high reputation for holiness and learning would have made their testimony in his favour of extreme value. When the Princess Elizabeth was born, the king made a point of having her baptized with great solemnity and pomp in the Friars' Church at Greenwich. But threats and favours were alike useless, and the Order which could neither be perverted nor cowed had to face the brunt of the storm.

<sup>5</sup> It is not our intention, in the necessarily restrained limits of this historical sketch, to enter into the details of the lives of those of the Order in England whom the Church has now declared Blessed or Venerable. The lives of our English Franciscan martyrs will, at no very distant period, be published in a separate volume.

<sup>6</sup> *Certamen Seraphicum*, p. 8. *Sanders de Schism. Angli.* L. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Fran. à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.*, p. 42.

Greenwich<sup>8</sup>. He had also at one time filled the post of confessor to the Queen, and was remarkable for his devotion and simplicity. Preaching before the King in the Friary Church of Greenwich, on the 22nd Chapter of the Third Book of Kings, he applied to Henry the prophet's threat :

“Where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall the dogs lick thy blood, even thine.” ‘I,’ he continued, ‘am that Micheas whom thou wilt hate, because I must tell thee truly that this marriage is unlawful. I know that I shall eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of sorrow, yet because our Lord hath put it into my mouth, I must speak it. There are many other preachers, yea, too many, who preach, and persuade thee otherwise, feeding thy folly and frail affection upon hope of their own worldly promotion, and by that means betraying thy soul, thy honour, and thy posterity, to obtain fat benefices, to become rich abbots, and get episcopal jurisdiction and other ecclesiastical dignities. These, I say, are the four-hundred prophets, who, in the spirit of lying, seek to deceive thee. But take good heed lest, being seduced, thou find Achab’s punishment, and have thy blood licked up by the dogs.”

The king took the reprimand quietly, but to prevent any further ill impression on those who had heard the sermon, he on the following Sunday ordered a certain Doctor Curwin<sup>10</sup> to preach, in the same place. Doctor Curwin styled Brother Peto a dog, a slanderer, a base beggarly friar, a rebel and traitor, saying that no subject ought to speak so audaciously to princes, and further spoke in praise of the king’s marriage with Anne Boleyn. After

<sup>8</sup> Stow, p. 561-62. *Certamen*, p. 12. Collier, *Eccles. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 86.

<sup>9</sup> *Certamen*, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Afterwards Dean of Hereford.



having as he supposed utterly crushed Brother Peto, the preacher raising his voice cried out :

“ I speak to thee, Peto, who makest thyself Micheas, that thou mayest speak evil of kings, but art not now to be found, being fled for fear and shame at being unable to answer my arguments.” Whereupon Brother Elstow a grave and religious father of the same Friary, cried out from the rood loft where he was listening. “ Good sir, you know that Brother Peto is now gone, as he was commanded, to a Provincial Council at Canterbury, and not fled from fear of thee ; for to-morrow he will return. Meanwhile, I am here as another Micheas, and I will lay down my life to prove the truth of all that he has taught out of the Holy Scriptures. To this combat I challenge thee before God and all impartial judges, even thee, Curwin, I say, who art one of the four hundred prophets into whom the spirit of lying is entered, and who seekest by adultery to establish the succession, betraying the king into endless perdition, more for thine own vain glory and hope of promotion than for the discharge of thy clogged conscience and the king’s salvation.”<sup>11</sup> Having said this Brother Elstow grew warm and spoke with such earnestness that no one could stop him, till the king himself commanded him to hold his peace.

The following day both Friars were summoned before the king and his council. On being reprimanded Brother Peto fearlessly defended his sermon, and even predicted that unless the king changed his conduct he would not have a male descendant to carry on his royal line. The Earl of Essex said that both Peto and Elstow ought to be put into a sack and thrown into the Thames. “ My Lord,” replied Brother Elstow, smiling, “ be pleased to frighten with such threats your Court epicures, men who have

<sup>11</sup> *Certamen*, p. 13.

lost their courage in their palate, and softened their minds with pomp and pleasure. Such people, who are tied by their senses close to the world, are most likely to yield to your menaces; but they make no impression upon us. We count it an honour to suffer for our duty, and bless God for keeping us firm under trial; as for your Thames, the road to heaven lies as near by water as by land, and therefore, it is indifferent to us which way we go thither." The two Friars were reprovèd and dismissed by the council, and almost immediately afterwards went abroad where they remained till Queen Mary's reign.<sup>12</sup>

The following year 1534,<sup>13</sup> Brother Hugh Rich, Guardian of Canterbury and Brother Richard Risbey, Guardian of Richmond, were hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn, on the charge of treason for "aiding and abetting Elisabeth Barton," commonly called the Holy Maid of Kent.<sup>14</sup> On the 20th of April they were dragged on hurdles to the

<sup>12</sup> Burnet, vol. ii., p. 316.

<sup>13</sup> Lingard, *Hist. of England*, vol. v., p. 13; Stow, p. 571; Sanders, *De Schism. Angl.* L. i.; Gonzaga, 1st Parte *De Origine Seraphica Religionis*, p. 104; Mason, *Certamen Seraphicum*, p. 9; Padre Pollini, O.P., *Hist. Eccel. della Rivoluzione d' Inghilterra*, L. 1, cxxviii.

<sup>14</sup> There is some diversity of opinion as to whether the two Friars Elstow and Peto fell into disgrace before or after the condemnation of FF. Rich and Risbey. Collier, Stow and some others, place Brother Peto's sermon in 1533, which is the most probable date. Burnet, in his "History of the Reformation," asserts that this sermon drew down a visitation upon the Friars at Richmond, which was made by Rowland Lee Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and Thomas Bedyl, secretary to Cromwell, who ordered them to swear that, "by the law of God, the Pope had no greater jurisdiction in the kingdom than any other foreign Bishop." It is certain that this visitation was made in 1534, after the execution of the Maid of Kent, but the fact that the Order was already in disgrace with the King when Blessed Forest was imprisoned, and Brothers Rich and Risbey put to death, seems to confirm the statement of Mason, Bouchier and other Franciscan writers that the whole Order fell under the King's displeasure on account of Elstow and Peto's sermons preached in 1533.

place of execution.<sup>15</sup> At Tyburn, a high gallows had been erected on a scaffold, at its foot was a cauldron of boiling water, an axe and a huge knife. As Father Rich<sup>16</sup> mounted the ladder, a messenger arrived from the king offering him life and liberty if he would throw off the Pope's authority and acknowledge the royal supremacy.<sup>17</sup> But the Friar answered calmly: "Not only will I not rebel against the authority of the Pope, but I am ready to suffer the most cruel death for Holy Mother Church. *O God I will freely sacrifice to Thee, and will praise Thy Name for it is good.*" He was cut down while still alive, ripped open and his still palpitating heart torn out and held up to the people with the words, "Behold the heart of a traitor," it was then burnt, and his body was quartered, cast into boiling water, and then placed on the four chief gates of the city.<sup>18</sup> Father Risbey next mounted the ladder, life and liberty were offered him on the same terms, but, his constancy being immovable, the executioner siezed him. He too was cut down alive, as the man groping through his body siezed his heart, Father Risbey said. "*Take care! the heart which thou touchest is a sacred thing consecrated to God.*"<sup>19</sup> The body was also quartered and stuck above the gates.

On the 11th of August of the same year, before any of the other religious Orders were molested, the Friars of Greenwich were expelled. The communities of Rich-

<sup>15</sup> Stow, Chronicle, p. 571. Bouchier, *Hist. Eccles. de Martyr FF. Ordinis Minorum qui in Anglia passi sunt*. Pt. ii., Inglostadii 1583.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Barton was also executed, with two Benedictines and two secular priests.

<sup>17</sup> Bouchier, *Ibid.* Padre Civezza; *Storia della Missioni Franciscane*, vol. vii., p. 537. <sup>18</sup> Bouchier, *loci. cit.*: *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Bouchier, *Ibid.* Padre Civezza, vol. vii., p. 538. The Franciscan Martyrology gives the details of these two Friars, but places them under the 3rd of June.

mond, Canterbury, and all the other houses of the Observants soon met the same fate. The Augustinians were put into the empty Friaries. About two hundred Franciscans were thrown into prison,<sup>20</sup> others were confined in the houses of the Conventuals.<sup>21</sup>

Henry Standish who was Provincial and Guardian of London ere he was appointed to the See of St. Asaph, died in 1535, he was one of the Queen's friends, and one of the few Bishops who resisted the king.<sup>22</sup>

The execution of the two hundred Friars, who had been imprisoned in 1534, had been delayed through the media-

<sup>20</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 233.

<sup>21</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.* p. 50-51. As has been already stated the English Province had always been zealous for the strict observance, so that when the Bull of Union came out in 1517, all the Friars were united in one body, and the Province reckoned as one of the Observance. Still there were some few houses which enjoyed small rents, and where there were Friars who had accepted mitigations of the Rule. Henry VII., in founding new Friaries had especially stipulated that they should be for the Observants only. Hence arose the custom of speaking of the Observants in England as if they were a distinct Province, inasmuch as Henry VIII's., wrath was first vented on those houses, which his father had founded and which he himself had formerly protected. At the General Chapter held at Rome in 1517, these houses were reckoned as twelve,<sup>1</sup> and styled of the Observance simply to distinguish them from those Friaries, where some mitigations had crept in. At the same Chapter the English Province was stated to need no reform, since no sooner was the Bull published than the Conventuals in England submitted themselves to the Observants. The two names at the Reformation apply rather to the material buildings than to the Friars themselves. To the very last the English Friars stood firm in their resistance to Henry VIII., not so much as one man falling from the Order in the time of trial.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>22</sup> It is not the Province of this work to refute the gross slander brought against this Friar and Bl. John Forest by the protestant Stow, who states that they both took the oath of supremacy.

<sup>1</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *In Hist. Provi. Angl.* p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Pole, *de Unitate Ecclesia.* Francis à Sta. Clara. *Hist. Min.*, p. 10. *Collect. Angl. Min.* p., 245.



tion of their friend Sir Thomas Wriothsesley, a privy councillor, but he could not alleviate their cruel sufferings. The king would gladly have hanged them all, but popular indignation had been roused as the number of prisoners went on steadily increasing. It was therefore resolved to get rid of the Friars quietly. Some of them were starved<sup>23</sup> to death, others tortured till they expired, and a great number were linked together with iron chains,<sup>24</sup> and drafted off by twos to rot away in the county prisons. The exact number who perished is unknown. The Franciscan Menologium on the 27th of September commemorates thirty-four Friars and "others not a few," who perished in 1537. The Martyrology commemorates on July 31st., thirty-two who sunk under ill-usage in 1538. Sanders<sup>25</sup> mentions twenty-two who died in prison, and an immense number of them all perished either on the scaffold or by starvation or through their sufferings in prison.<sup>26</sup> This same year the VV. Antony Brorbey or Brookby, Thomas Cort and Thomas Belchiam won their crowns. All three were martyred in prison, and certain marvels which happened at the death of the last mentioned, induced the King to set eight Friars at liberty,<sup>27</sup> with orders to leave the country. Four of them Brother Thomas Packington, Bonaventure Roo, John Tuit, and Richard Carter died of the hardships they had undergone, a few days after they were released from prison.<sup>28</sup>

The martyrdom of Blessed John Forest took place on

<sup>23</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *In Hist. Min.*, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Gonzaga, *de Origine Seraph. Relig.* P. iii., p. 855.

<sup>25</sup> Sanders, *de Schism. Angl.*, L. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Contemporary account of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, preserved in the Vatican, *apud Pocock's "Records of the Reformation,"* vol. ii., p. 562.

<sup>27</sup> Gonzaga, p. 855.

<sup>28</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 238.

the 22nd of May 1538. The following year the Venerable N. Waire<sup>29</sup> was hanged at St. Thomas Waterings.<sup>30</sup>

In the September of 1539, the King took possession of all the Franciscan Friaries in the kingdom, the small communities remaining in them were turned adrift, and shortly afterwards their houses and churches were demolished.<sup>31</sup>

In this general spoliation nothing was found worth putting into the royal treasury. With three exceptions the eighty Friaries in England are named by Speed and others as "not rated," "no value," "no rents." There were, however, many valuable old manuscripts in the different libraries. These were sold for the meanest pur-

<sup>29</sup> His real name is unknown.

<sup>30</sup> *Sacra Rituum Congregatione, Positio super introductione causae*, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> Of the eighty Friaries known to have been demolished, only one, the first foundation in London, was put to any religious use. The Friary of Oxford, one of the largest and most important of the Order, was let out in different lots, the rents being paid to the king till he sold the premises in 1545.<sup>1</sup> The rooms in which Duns Scotus, Thomas Bungey, Roger Bacon dwelt and studied, the church where they and others prayed, were all demolished and sold stone by stone. Wood mentions that, when he was a freshman, there was a little old building, whose lower windows touched the ground. Tradition says this was Roger Bacon's study. The Friary Church of London, situated in Farringdon-Ward-Within, was used as a wine-store till 1546, when the king made a parish church of it. But the value of the whole of the Friary grounds and buildings was so small that his Majesty was forced to add to it St. Bartholomew's Hospital valued at 305*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*, and the other churches, with an annual grant of eight hundred marks in land. This new parish church was called "Christ's Church," and bore inscriptions on the walls that it was "*founded by Henrie the eight.*"<sup>2</sup> "*A very odd foundation,<sup>3</sup> to let two churches out of four stand, subverting the other two and a hospital, and call himself the founder.*" In 1552 the Friary itself was repaired, and turned into an orphanage, which has since become the *Blue Coat* school.

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.*, vol. i., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Speed, p. 783.

<sup>3</sup> Stevens, *Monasticon*, ap. Dugdale, vol. vi., p. 1515.

poses after their covers had been pulled off by the greedy commissioners.<sup>32</sup>

In 1550, the chief part of Duns Scotus' manuscripts were burnt at Oxford, after being carried about the town in a ludicrous show as "popish rags." This piece of pageantry was called the "Funeral Pile, or the Burial of Scotus and the Scotists."<sup>33</sup> Nor were the "Subtle Doctor's" the only volumes thus treated. Many Records and Registers of religious Orders and the lives of many holy men were thus burnt in mockery. Henry VIII. caused a deed<sup>34</sup> to be drawn up, which was sent first to the Friary

<sup>32</sup> Fuller, *Church History*, B. vi., p. 335. Collier, *Eccles. Hist.*, p. 2, B. iii., p. 166.

<sup>33</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.*, p. 52.

<sup>34</sup> The following is the deed as given in Father Parkinson's *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica*, Pt. ii., p. 35—37. "For as moche as we the Warden and Freers of the House of Saynt Francis in Coventre, in the County of Warwick, commonly called the Grey Freers in Coventre, doo profoundly consider, that the perfection of Christian Livinge dothe not consist in dume Ceremonies, werynge of a Grey Coot, disgeasing our Self aftur straunge Passions, dokynge, noddynge, and bekyng, in gurdng our Selves wythe a Gurdle fulle of Knotts, and other like Papistical Ceremonies, wherein we hade ben mooste principally practised and mislyd in Times paste; but the very tru Waye to plesse God, and to live a tru Christian Mon, witheout any Ypocrisie, and fayned diseymulation, is sincerely declared unto us by our Maister Christe, his Evangelistes and Aposteles. Being mynded hereafter to follow the same, conformynge our Selfe unto the Will and pleasure of our Supreme Hedde, under God on Erthe, the Kynges Majestie, and not to followe henseforth the superstitius Traditions of ony Forinsecall Potentate, or Peere; with mutual Assent and Consent,<sup>1</sup> doo surrender and yelde up into the Hondes of the same, all our seide House of Saynt Francis, in the City of Coventre, commonly callyd the Grey Freers in Coventre, wythe alle the Londes,<sup>2</sup> Tenements, Gardens, Medowes, Waters, Pondiards, Fedynge, Pastures, Commens; Rents, Reversions, and alle other our Interest, Ryghts, or Titles, appertaining unto the same. Mooste humbly beseeching his most noble Grace

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale gives the word *Forced*.

<sup>2</sup> Coventry was destitute of any of these things, enjoying nothing except a permission to receive the charity of good people. Dugdale, vol. vi., p. 1534.

at Coventry, and then, with slight verbal alterations, to the other religious houses in the kingdom. Fuller<sup>35</sup> says that it was pressed upon all monks, friars, priests and nuns, that the deed could and would be signed without their consent, and, therefore, it was better for them in the present posture of affairs to make a virtue of necessity, the rather, because this compliment conduced nothing to the King's right, but might add much to their own advantage. Burnet acknowledges,<sup>36</sup> that in many instances the original document could not be found, though a document was always registered, to make it appear that the offer of surrender came from the Friars themselves. In other cases, he admits, the documents were only signed by a few.

to dispose of us, and of the same, as beste shall stonde wythe his mooste gracious plesure: And further frely to graunte unto every on of us, his License under wretynge and Sceale, to chaunge our Habitts into Secular Fassion, is to receve such maner of Livinges as other Secular Priests commonly be preferred unto. And We alle faithfully shall pray Almighty Gode to preserve his mooste noble Grace wythe Increse of moche Felicitie and Honor. And, in Witness of alle is singular the Premisses, We the said Warden and Convent of the Grey Freers in Coventre, to thes Presences have putte our convent Seealle, the fivithe day of October, in the thirtythe Yeare of the Raynge of our mooste Soveraynge Lord King Henry Eyghte. Anno 1539.

John Stafford, Gardian.

Thomas Moller.

Thomas Sanderson.

Thomas Banpit.

John Abell.

John Woode.

William Gosnelle.

Roger Lily.

Thomas Ancock.

Mathew Walker.

Robart Walker.

<sup>35</sup> *Storia delle Missioni Franciscane*, vol. vii., p. 582, quoting from a *Life of St. Francis*, London, Burns and Oates.

<sup>36</sup> Padre Civezza, *loc. cit. Ibid.*, from whose *Storia* the whole account of these proceedings is taken.



Stevens in his *Monasticon*, asserts that there is good reason for believing that many of the documents were registered with forged signatures; and that, if even these instruments were signed by the Friars, not one fourth part of them put their names thereto. In proof of this, he mentions the surrender of the convent of Stamford, where, out of a very large community, only ten names are found appended to the deed. It must also be remembered, that some were imposed on by the assertion that it was a mere legal form, and that they need not trouble about the exact meaning of every sentence. Every means had been used to blacken their characters, and worse still was threatened if they did not yield a prompt obedience to the new head of the Church. The form of surrender which we have given is a striking proof of the falsehood of the charges of laxity and immorality which were made against the Friars. Had a tenth part of them been true, or could even less have been brought home to them, the accusations would have been inserted in this extraordinary deed, and the Friars compelled to sign it.

Many of the Friars escaped to Ireland where they were warmly received. Amongst those who were banished was Brother Henry Hostam, who was welcomed as a confessor of the Faith in Flanders. He was twice appointed Visitor of the Province of Brabant, and finally chosen Provincial. Many of the English Franciscans distinguished themselves in this Province; some of them became Professors of Divinity at Louvain.<sup>87</sup> Nearly a century later Brother Pinchartius the then Provincial of Brabant, told Brother Francis à Sta. Clara Davenport, that they (speaking of the Province) were indebted to the English Friars for their learning.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Hist. Min.*, p. 55. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 247.

<sup>88</sup> *Collect.*, p. 247.

But though the English Province was thus broken up and scattered, it was by no means crushed out. The moment Mary ascended the throne in 1553, the Franciscans of the Observance the first who had been expelled,<sup>39</sup> were now again the first to be restored by the Queen. Brother Elstow returned to Greenwich as Guardian. Amongst the community of the Friary which was restored in 1556, were several Spaniards, and Philip the Second's own confessor, Brother Alphonsus and Castro resided there.<sup>40</sup>

In 1554, Cardinal Pole was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in the Friary Church of Greenwich. The second Friary in London, built by Archbishop Kilwarby, was also restored by Queen Mary, and Brother Peto was appointed confessor to the Queen.<sup>41</sup>

The few Friars who had survived the reign of Henry VIII., soon gathered together. Amongst them were Brother John Gray, and Brother John Standish, nephew to the Bishop of St. Asaph, who had been forced into exile while still a novice. Also Brother Richard Britan who had suffered a weary imprisonment for defending the Pope's supremacy in the schools at Oxford. He received the habit in the restored friary of Greenwich. He was a man of singular austerity, living on bread alone, as an eye witness relates.<sup>42</sup>

Brother John Standish was remarkable for his learning, piety and zeal. He published a book on the abuses arising from the false interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures which had been translated into English and were being irreverently read by all classes, and explained by tailors, weavers, cobblers, and silly women.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Burnet, vol. ii., p. 340.

<sup>40</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 251.

<sup>41</sup> Fuller, *Church Hist.*, Book viii., p. 15.

<sup>42</sup> Sanders, *Apud Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 249.

<sup>43</sup> Mason, *Certamen*, p. 10.

In 1557, Brother Peto was appointed to the Bishopric<sup>44</sup> of Salisbury, by Paul IV., who also made him his *Legate a Latere*.<sup>45</sup>

In 1558, Queen Mary died, and the following year Elizabeth "utterly suppressed the Friary at Greenwich where she had received baptism."<sup>46</sup> The Friars were all banished, but in spite of exile and confinement a regular succession of Superiors was kept up, who admitted novices and professed them privately, even in the most severe and dangerous times: prisons became their Friaries, dungeons their cells, poverty, in the sense of literally having "not where to lay their heads," their portion, but still the English Franciscans flourished, although the Province in the strict regular sense of the word had been destroyed. The seal of the Province of England, our Lady of the

<sup>44</sup> Godwyn, *Catalogue of Bishops of Salisbury*. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 252, Wood, *Athen. Oxon.*, Pt. i., p. 587.

<sup>45</sup> Lingard, vol. v., chap. vi., p. 254. The appointment of Brother Peto to the see of Salisbury has been placed by some authors in 1544, when they say he was nominated in place of a certain John Salop, or Capon, nominated by Henry VIII. Collier agrees with Wood and others that Brother Peto was appointed on the death of Salop in 1557. All are agreed that Brother Peto was not in England at the moment when the Holy Father created him Cardinal and made him his Legate in place of Cardinal Pole. The Pontificate of Paul IV. only began in 1555, which agrees with Godwyn's statement that, "Brother Peto was made Legate soon after Paul IV. was advanced to the Papacy." The place of this Friar's death has also been disputed. Francis à Sta. Clara says he died in England, but all other authors state that he died abroad in 1558, for Queen Mary, who was averse to any appointment which interfered with Cardinal Pole's rights, forbade Brother Peto to return, and while the question was still under discussion, he died from the effects of a bruise he had received in 1553, when Father Elstow and himself were pelted with stones by a mob on their way from London to Greenwich.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Hist. Min.*, p. 54. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 254. Mason, *Certamen*, p. 15. Sanders.

<sup>1</sup> Collier, *Eccles. Hist.*, Pt. ii., p. 379. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 249, 252, 253.

Immaculate Conception with the legend—*Sigillum Provinciali Angliæ FF. minorum Regularis Observantiæ*, preserved almost miraculously, was handed on from Provincial to Provincial,<sup>47</sup> passing through the hands of the martyrs, V. John Buckley, into those of Brother William Stanny, by whom it was delivered to Father John Gennings the first *Custos* of the Province re-established in 1625.

Among those who died in exile was Brother Elstow. Brother John Gray,<sup>48</sup> who had returned to England during Mary's reign, gained the martyr's crown in Brussels.<sup>49</sup> He was of noble Scottish lineage; and heir to an immense fortune, but he freely sacrificed all, refusing a rich canonry to become a Friar Minor. He was in his seventieth year, worn out with hardships and austerities, when on the 5th of June, 1579, the Protestant factions who were continually stirring up troubles in the Netherlands, broke into the Friary of Brussels. Owing to the presence of mind of the porter, Brother James, an Englishman, the community escaped and the altar plate and relics were concealed, but Brother John refused to fly, and Brother James stayed with him. "Let us go into God's house said Brother John, "where can we die so happily as in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, on the holy spot where we hope to be buried." Here the rabble found them, Brother James was beaten till he was unconscious, and then left for dead, then the mob fell on Brother John, kicking, abusing and beating him, inflicting large wounds on his head. He, not knowing what else to do, humbly

<sup>47</sup> *Hist. Min.*, p. 54. *Collect. Angl. Min.* p. 254. *Certamen*, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> *Martyrologium*, p. 236. Bouchier, *De Martyrio F.F. Ordinis Minorum qui sub Henrico VIII. passi sunt*, Pt. iii., p. 131.

<sup>49</sup> It must be clearly understood that the word *martyr* when applied to those on whom the Church has not yet pronounced, is used in all submission to the decree of Urban VIII.



begged their pardon. "What! shall we pardon thee vile wretch of a Friar?" exclaimed one of them, striking him with a sword as he knelt before the Altar. "I forgive you," said Brother John, and with these words he expired. The news of his death spread quickly and crowds flocked to the Friary, and some one labouring under a terrible disease was cured by kissing a cloth dipped in his blood.<sup>50</sup> Brother John was a man of singular piety, and Brother Thomas Bouchier, who knew him, states that he bore on his feet the marks of the sacred stigmata, which marks were the length and breadth of a quarter of a thumb." The same Friar says, he saw and examined one of Brother John's feet, and would have seen the other, but wished not to give trouble to a feeble old man. Brother George Denis, who entered the Order 1558, at Greenwich, just before the suppression, went to Liége, where, after a holy life he died in 1585.<sup>51</sup> He, too, was of noble family, and standard-bearer to Henry VIII., at the siege of Boulogne in 1545.

Brother Thomas Bouchier, the author of the History of the Friars who were put to death from 1536 to 1582, belonged to the family of the Earls of Bath, and of the Bouchier-Wreys of Devonshire. He entered the Order in Queen Mary's reign, he was professed abroad, and became a Doctor of the Sorbonne. He afterwards went to Rome and became a member of the community at the celebrated Ara Coeli. He was appointed Penitentiary of St. John Lateran. The first edition of his book was printed in Paris, the second in 1583 at Ingolstadt. He was famed both for piety and learning, and died at Rome in 1586.

Brother Steven Fox, who was Custos of Greenwich<sup>52</sup> when the Friars were expelled in 1559, was banished by order of Queen Elizabeth. He went to Antwerp, but the religious disturbances in that city obliged him to flee with

<sup>50</sup> Bouchier, *loc cit.* <sup>51</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 55. <sup>52</sup> Mason, *Certamen*, p. 15.

about twenty English Poor Clares who had settled there. Under his protection, the nuns went first to Rouen and finally settled at Lisbon, where Philip II. caused a monastery to be built for them. Brother Stephen died in Portugal in 1588, and was buried in the monastery church.

Brother Thomas Felton. This Friar was the son of the celebrated William Felton, who was executed in 1569 for high treason, for having affixed a copy of the Bull of Excommunication, issued against Queen Elizabeth by S. Pius V., to the gates of the so-called Bishop of London's residence. Brother Thomas was born about 1567, at Southwark, then a village near the city of London. William, as he was called in the world, was made page to the Lady Lovat. He remained but a short time in her household, being sent to the newly-founded English College of Douay, which had been obliged to remove to Rheims on account of the tumults in the Netherlands, in 1578. Here he gave unmistakable signs of a religious vocation, and received the tonsure in 1583 from the hands of the Archbishop of Rheims, the Cardinal de Guise. He shortly after entered the Franciscan Order, into which he was admitted on the recommendation of Dr. W. Allen, the founder of the English College. Soon after pronouncing the solemn vows, his health obliged him to return to England. He was arrested near the coast when leaving it again after a short sojourn, taken to London, and confined in the loathsome dens of the prison in the Poultry, where he spent two years in the greatest misery and torture. At the end of this time, one of his aunts, who had some credit at the Court, succeeded in obtaining his release. Brother Thomas was not yet of age, and on obtaining his liberty he made a fresh effort to return to his Convent to receive Holy Orders. He was again arrested, and imprisoned in the Bridewell. Lady Lovat herself, who would have helped him, was likewise im-

prisoned in the Fleet. Yet, Brother Thomas effected his escape, but only to be again taken. He was now confined in a cage, so low he could not stand upright nor even sit, and too short to lie down in. Barely enough bread and water to sustain life were given him, as the goaler tells us, and as is likewise confirmed by the testimony of his sister, Frances, then a young girl, who later on married one of the Salisburys. After three days and three nights spent in the cage, he was sent to grind the mill, still with the same scanty nourishment. He was likewise hung up by his hands, which were bound so tightly that the blood spirted from his fingers, to try and wring from him the names of the priests he knew in England and abroad. One Sunday he was dragged by force to the Chapel to assist at the Protestant service. His hands being free, he stopped his ears, on which his arms were tightly tied to his chair. But on this occasion his tormentors had to give over, since his hands being bound, he began to beat the ground with his feet, and to invoke with a loud voice the Sacred Name of Jesus.

At length when the news of the approaching Spanish Armada reached England, Brother Thomas was led before the judge, and asked on which side he was—Spain or England? and on his answer that he was for God and his country, he was asked if he recognized the Queen as Head of the Church? Upon which Brother Thomas made answer, that he had read many chronicles, and in none of them had he ever seen that God had invested any woman with this high dignity? He was immediately condemned to death, and on the following day, the 28th of August, 1588, he was hanged at Brentwood, before he had completed his twenty-first year.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *Sacra Rituum Congregatione. Expositio causae*: p. 33, 122. *Storia delle Missioni Francescane*, vol. vii., p. 612—13.

The Ven. John Buckley, won his crown in 1598. Brother Collier died of the hardships of his prison in 1590, after a close confinement. Brother John Richel ended his days at Louvain. He was one of those who were professed at Greenwich, during the brief interval of peace in Mary's reign. He was confessor to the exiled Lady Hungerford and her sister, both belonging to the Dormer family, and both members of the Third Order.<sup>54</sup> Brother Nelson, another of the Greenwich community, lived quietly near Hereford during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., and died in 1628.

There was one Friar in particular Brother John, commonly known as the "old beggar,"<sup>55</sup> who devoted himself to the poor Catholics in England. He lived in Layland, in Lancashire, and was so noted for his great virtues and penitential life, that the Earl of Derby prevailed upon Elizabeth to grant him Letters of Protection by which he was authorized to wear his grey habit in public when the Penal Laws were in full force. He had the gift of miracles, and when at last he was confined to his room by old age and infirmities, people flocked to him from all parts of the North bringing with them, not merely their children and friends, but even their flocks and herds. The woman who nursed him in his last sickness, who was living when Brother Angelus Mason wrote his account, bore witness that he never received or touched money, and that he told her he was a mendicant, and William Walton one of his penitents declared that he always went bare-foot and wore a grey habit and a cord of St. Francis. He died about 1590, and was buried in Layland Churchyard.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 260.

<sup>55</sup> *Certamen*, p. 15—16.

<sup>56</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 259. Owing to his being styled "monk" on his tombstone the Benedictines claim him, but many writers erroneously style the Friars Minor, *Monachi*.



## PART XI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the numbers of those who devoted themselves to labour in England, during the dark days that followed the accession of Elizabeth, the flourishing Province founded by Brother Agnellus in 1220, slowly became extinct. In the statistics drawn up at the General Chapter held in 1623, the English Province which is ranked amongst the Provinces of the Observance is preceded by a cross to show that it had died out.

In 1614, Brother William Stanney the Sub-Commissary-general<sup>1</sup> of the English Province, gave the habit to Brother John Gennings, who had been converted by the prayers of his martyred brother, Edmund Gennings a secular priest. The one desire of Brother John was to see the Province restored of which he was now almost the only representant, and Brother William observing in him an extraordinary zeal, joined to many virtues and talents, delivered into his hands the seal of the Order.<sup>2</sup> Brother John then persuaded several students of the English College at Douai to join him and make their novitiate in the Recollect<sup>3</sup> Friary of Ypres belonging to

<sup>1</sup> Francis à Sta. Clara, *Fragmenta*, p. 126. *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> *Certamen*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> It has been already fully explained in the general history of the Order how, in 1503, houses of Recollection sprang up, and how, little by little, some of these houses became first separate Custodies, and finally regular Provinces, forming eventually a distinct Branch in the great family of the Observance. It has also been explained that every Province

the Province of St. Joseph. In 1616, Father Gennings established himself and his little community consisting of six Friars, at Gravelines. Within three years through the benefactions of the faithful both English and Foreigners, he succeeded in collecting sufficient means to establish the Friary and College of St. Bonaventure at Douai. This new Foundation was approved by the Rev. Father General Benignus of Genoa, who, at the General Chapter of Salamanca in 1618, gave Father Gennings full power to erect a noviciate and seminary, and to call together for

of the Regular Observance is bound to have two or three Houses of Recollection for such Friars as may wish to lead a stricter and more contemplative life. The Recollects established themselves in the Netherlands in 1598, when, by order of the General, Father Bonaventure Secusi, the Friary of Mechlin was given to them. As their number increased, Clement VIII. ranged their different houses into Custodies, and finally Father Andrew de Soto, Commissary for Belgium, himself a Recollect, was named by the General early in 1600, promoter of this reformation in Belgium. It is, however, an open question whether, in 1614, Ypres was a Recollect Friary, or a Friary of Recollection. In the synoptical table of the Order, drawn up by the Rev. Father Marie Leon Patrem, the establishment of the Province of St. Joseph, in Flanders, is placed in 1628. Gonzaga, p. 985 of his description of all the Provinces of the Order, mentions that the Friary of the Holy Cross at Ypres, had relaxed its discipline, but was reformed in 1503, and incorporated into the Province of *Parisian-France*. In the division of Provinces made in 1680, given by Hueber in his *Menologium*, p. 174, the Province of Flanders is reckoned of the strict Observance. The name of Recollects has been frequently used by writers in speaking of F. Gennings and his sons, and the question has naturally been raised, was the Province, restored in 1625, Recollect or Observant? There is little doubt that, although the house founded by F. Gennings at Douai took the name of *Conventus Recollectorum Anglorum Duacensis*, it was simply in the sense in which all the novitiate houses of the Observants are houses of Recollection. Father Francis of Sta. Clara Davenport, Provincial in 1637, and again in 1650, who was sent to Rome in 1624 to hasten the re-establishment of the English Province, insists in several passages of his History that the said Province was restored, as it had been formerly, of the true observance, styled nowadays true reformed, or recollect. *Ratio Recollectionis nihil*

the formation of the Province all the remaining English Friars from wherever they were to be found. In 1620, the Commissary-General for Belgium, Father Andrew à Soto, who in every way seconded and supported Father Gennings, empowered him, in a Chapter held at Brussels to receive to their probation any secular priests of approved doctrine and morals, even in England, and he nominated him Vicar Provincial until the Province was sufficiently numerous to hold a Chapter of its own. Father Bonaventura Jackson was summoned from Mechlin,<sup>4</sup> to be Guardian of Douai. In 1619,<sup>5</sup> Father Andrew summoned the Venerable Father Francis Bell from the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Spain, to assist in the work of restoration. In 1624,<sup>6</sup> Father Francis à Sta. Clara was sent by Father Gennings to Rome, to soli-

*aliud est quam Observantiae restauratio.* Father A. Parkinson, the learned author of the *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica*, published in 1726, who had been himself Provincial, devotes some space to prove that the Province was restored *as it died out of the true and strict Observance*. Now, as the whole history of the Order in England, up to the Bull of Union in 1517, bears witness that the English Friars were of the regular Observance, it is evident that the word *strict*, in their case, simply means *regular*, accepting no dispensations, no mitigations, and that it cannot be applied to them in the sense in which it is usually applied to designate one of the four distinct, although not really separated Branches of the great Franciscan Family. The ancient French Recollects, and the ancient and modern Reformed of Italy, lay great stress upon the distinctions; whereas the Discalced, and above all the ancient and modern Recollects of Belgium, Holland, in a word, of the Germanic-Belgian nation, have decreased, and do actually decrease in practice, their distinctions from the Parent stem of the Observance. The Observants of Belgium, and in the course of time of England, wishing for a stricter Observance, took the name of Recollect, and of "*Stricteris Observantiae*," but they wished to remain united to the main body of the Order, especially in their administration; they proclaimed themselves of the Observance and declared that the distinction was merely accidental.

<sup>4</sup> *Certamen*, p. 21.<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*.

cit the official restoration of the English Province, at the impending General Chapter. Accordingly, at the Chapter held at Rome, May 1625, Father Bernardine of Senis, then General of the whole Order,<sup>7</sup> with the sanction of Urban VIII., declared the Province to be restored to its former rights and privileges, with this sole restriction, that, until the number of English Friars increased it should retain the name of a separate Custody, and the Superior be styled *Custos*, although enjoying the full power of Provincial. In 1629 St. Bernardine de Senis, from the General Chapter of Madrid, addressed his letters patent "to his beloved fathers and brothers in Christ of our English Province," announcing that the prosperous state of their body as to numbers and merits, justified him to accede to the prayers of the Friars themselves and of the principal English Catholics, to fully re-establish the Province with a Provincial, and definitors.<sup>8</sup> Father Gennings was appointed first Provincial,<sup>9</sup> Father Francis à Sta. Clara Davenport, Custos of Custoses, FF. Bonaventure Jackson, Nicholas Day, Jerome Pickford, and the Ven. Father Bell, Definitors. To Father Joseph Bergaigne who had succeeded Father Andrew à Soto as Commissary-General

<sup>7</sup> F. Bernardinus de Senis, totius Ordinis F.F. Minorum de Observantia Minister Generalis et servus, dilecto nobis in Christo patri fr. Joanni Gennings Angliæ vicario salutem.

Cum auctoritate nostra et consensu totius definitorii generalis habitus Romæ capitulo generali, anno magni jubilæi 1625 restituta sit nostra Provincia Angliæ, concessis omnibus privilegiis, quibus aliæ Provinciæ gaudere solent, hac restrictione annexa, quod ad tempus usque dum numerus fratrum augeatur, Superior nomine custodis tantum cum plenitudine potestatis Provincialium fruatur, qui etiam in capitulis generalibus habeat ius suffragandi cum voce activa et passiva, sicut alii vocales; hinc pro officii nostri ratione tenore harum te dictæ Provinciæ custodem constituimus et declaramus etc.—Datum ex conventu nostro Ara cœli tano Romæ.

27 Maii, 1625.—(*Certamen*, p. 23.)

<sup>8</sup> *Certamen*, p. 24. Oliver, *Collections*, p. 552. <sup>9</sup> *Certamen*, p. 24, 25.



for the Provinces of England and Great Britain, he committed the charge of expediting and concluding the whole business.<sup>10</sup> In virtue of which commission Father Bergaigne, in 1630, signified to the Venerable Father Bell to summon the new Provincial, custos, definitors, and six other Fathers then labouring in England, to assemble at Douai on the first Sunday in Advent to hold their first Provincial Chapter. Circumstances subsequently induced the Commissary-General to decide, to hold this Chapter near the Convent of the nuns of St. Elisabeth at Brussels,<sup>11</sup> now at Taunton.—

The next Chapter was held in 1634, in a Catholic house at Greenwich, and Father Gennings was re-elected Provincial. A moment of comparative peace reigned in England. A Friary was founded at York, and dedicated to our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>12</sup> The second Province had inherited the great devotion to our Blessed Lady, which had characterized the First, and was faithful to the teaching of Duns Scotus. In the Congregation

<sup>10</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 552.

<sup>11</sup> This foundation of Franciscan nuns of the Third Order was chiefly brought about by the strenuous efforts of F. Gennings. In 1619 two English ladies, both widows, under his direction, received the habit of the Third Order in the Friars' Church at Brussels. As they took the habit with the intention of beginning a convent of their own nation, as soon as possible, they were, by a special privilege, allowed to wear the Grey Habit and Scapular publicly. In 1620, Father William Stanney sent for one of these ladies to England. She returned to Brussels with another widow; and in the following year was again summoned to England to fetch six subjects provided by F. Gennings. The house, etc., for establishing a convent were purchased, and in 1621, Father Andrew à Soto issued his letters patent for establishing this convent, and subjecting it to the Friars of the English Province. This community, which soon became very numerous, removed to Nieuport in 1637, and in 1662 to Bruges, to Winchester in 1794, and to Taunton in 1808.

<sup>12</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 560.

held in London in 1632, it was decreed that the hymn, "*Tota Pulchra*," should be sung every evening after Compline. Father Francis à Sta. Clara who had been appointed guardian of Douai and lector of theology, was elected Provincial in 1637, at the third chapter also held in London. This Friar, whose name in the world was Christopher Davenport, *alias* Francis Hunt, was born at Coventry. He was converted to the Catholic Faith whilst a student of Merton College, Oxford. He was one of those who joined Father Gennings in the Novitiate at Ypres. He was excellently well versed in school-divinity, in the Fathers and Councils, in philosophers, and in ecclesiastical and profane histories.<sup>13</sup> He was Chaplain to Queen Henrietta Maria, and at one time in high esteem at the Court of Charles I. During the brief period of peace which lasted from 1629 to 1641, he held frequent conferences with the most learned Anglicans. The King and Archbishop Laud, treated him with respect. He made many converts amongst whom was Godfrey Goodman, Bishop of Gloucester, whom he reconciled to the Church in 1655, on his death-bed, also Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, whom he received in 1670. He was re-elected Provincial in 1650, and in 1665. Whilst holding this office, in 1639, he ordered Father Gennings to take three of the Sisters from the English Franciscan Convent to keep a school in England. There is, however, no record of where the school was opened or how it succeeded. Father Francis died in 1680, at Somerset House, at eighty-two years of age, fifty-seven of which had been spent in missionary labours.

The first to suffer for the Faith was Father Walter Coleman, in religion Father Christopher of St. Clara. With the decline of the King's fortunes, his policy chang-

<sup>13</sup> Wood, *Athen. Oxon.*, vol. ii. p. 486.

ed and the Catholics were again the object of open persecution. Father Coleman was arrested on suspicion of being a priest and a friar. He was imprisoned in 1641, and sentenced to death. The sentence was, however, never actually executed. He died a lingering death from filth, cold and starvation, in 1645, in one of those pestiferous dungeons with which Newgate was so amply provided.<sup>14</sup>

In 1642, the Ven. Father John Baptist, in the world Thomas Bullaker, was executed. Venerables Father Paul of St. Magdalen (Henry Heath) and Father Francis Bell, suffered the following year. The same year, the fifth Provincial Chapter was held in London and Father Gennings was for the third time elected Provincial. The acts of this Chapter have all perished and the only detail preserved of the restorer of the English Province is, that after publishing the fruit of his religious experience in a book entitled *de Instituto Missionariorum*, he retired to Douai where he died in 1660, aged ninety or ninety-five.<sup>15</sup> In 1646, Ven. Martin of St. Felix, in the world John Woodcock, was martyred at Lancaster. The sixth Provincial Chapter was held at Douai, in 1647, when Father Jerome of St. Bonaventura Pickford was elected Provincial. The next Chapter, in which Francis of Sta. Clara was re-elected, was held at Nieuport. In 1653, three Friars whose names are not recorded perished from torture or starvation in prison.<sup>16</sup> In 1655, two more obtained their immortal crown in the same way, and an-

<sup>14</sup> Father Angelus Mason reckons Father Coleman as a true martyr, and, although he is not amongst those lately declared Venerable, his life, as given by this his contemporary, is so full of interest that it has been reserved for the volume of Lives which is in course of preparation.

<sup>15</sup> F. Gennings' portrait is still preserved at West Gorton.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 563.

other three in 1656. Father Lewis Wrest, a native of Kent<sup>17</sup> was for many years incarcerated in Lancaster Castle, but was afterwards released and died at Douai. In 1656, the Chapter was again held in London, and the persecution seemed rather to draw novices to the Order. Amongst these was Father John Baptist Canes, who was born and educated a protestant, but after two years spent in the University of Cambridge, he became a Catholic and a Friar. He was a man of great learning and talents. In 1648, he was sent on the English Mission. He was afterwards chosen by the Catholics to defend their cause against the leading protestant controversialists of the day, which he did most successfully. He published several books, amongst others the "*Fiat Lux*," in 1662, which he dedicated to Elisabeth, Countess of Arundel and Surrey, the mother of Cardinal Howard.

Father Antony le Grand, known as Bonaventura of St. Anna, who for many years served the mission in Oxfordshire, and whose works on Cartesian Philosophy,<sup>18</sup> were much read at Cambridge, he was elected Provincial a year before his death in 1698. Fathers John and Nicholas Cross, both Provincials,<sup>19</sup> and the Ven. John Wall also entered the Order about this time.

<sup>17</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 563.

<sup>18</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 553. Wood, *Athenæ Oxon.*, vol. iv., p. 233.

<sup>19</sup> It was during the Provincialship of Father John Cross, who was elected at the fifteenth General Chapter held in 1674 at Somerset House, that, according to recent researches made at Rome, the English Province, following the example of the Provinces of the Germano-Belgian nations, embraced the technically called "Strict Observance," and styled themselves Recollects. From this time they used another seal, *Sigillum Provincia Angliæ Fratrum Min. Recollectorum*, which seal together with the one given by Father W. Stanney to Fr. Gennings is still preserved at West Gorton. In the Chapter-Register, which is likewise at West Gorton, in all the official records of the Chapter meetings up to the year 1675, the



In 1660, the restoration of Charles II. and his marriage with a Catholic Princess once more brought a short interval of peace. In 1665, the Provincial Chapter accepted a property at Osmotherly<sup>20</sup> near Northallerton in Yorkshire, known as Mons Gratia. To this missionary residence, the gift of Miss Julia Walmesley, a boy's school was attached. The chapel was dedicated to Mary

Fathers call themselves *Fratres Minores Strictioris Observantia*, and from the year 1677 they invariably style themselves, *Fratres Minores Recollecti*. No document is, however, stamped with a seal till 1704, nor does any explanation of the change of name occur. If it be objected that, Recollect and Strict Observance are nowadays synonymous, it must be remembered that the Friars of the seventeenth century being well aware that there is no essential difference between the different terms, were not so particular how they signed themselves. As has been already explained, the term Strict Observance was applied to and used by the Friars of the old Province before the Recollect Branch existed. One and all of the four great Branches, united under one General, have at heart the strict and regular observance of the Seraphic Rule, though circumstances may lawfully modify the different observances of different Provinces. At the present day there are many Provinces of the Regular Observance far stricter than those of the so called Strict Observance. In the General Chapter at Mantua, in 1762, England is ranked with the Recollect Provinces. It was but natural that the noviciate house at Douai should follow the vicissitudes of the Province in which it was, although it was utterly independent, owing obedience to no one but F. Gennings and the General of the whole Order. The fact that Father Bergaigne was a Recollect, and that he presided at the first General Chapter is no argument in favour of the English Province having passed to the Recollect Observance before the date authenticated in the records kept at Rome. Father Marchant, who was novice-master to the young English Friars at Ypres, was a Recollect and Commissary-general in 1643, yet, though he writes to the Ven. Father Bell, to urge his return to Douai, stating that "the well being of our Province of England depends on your college at Douai," Father Angelus à St. Francisco Mason says in his *Certamen*, p. 20, that it is to Father Marchant that the English Province owes its *regular* Observance. Very few details are to be found respecting this second

<sup>20</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 559. The proper name of this parish, which formerly possessed a collegiate Church, is Osmundelea.

Mother of Divine grace, and Father William Shepheard was appointed to serve it.<sup>21</sup> Lady Elisabeth Pierrepont, daughter of Robert, earl of Kingston, presented a vestment, stole, etc., antependiums, and two credences, also an alb, amice, altar cloth and corporal of fine linen, all marked "E. P.," for the use of the Friars.<sup>22</sup>

In 1670, Father Nicholas Cross, then Provincial, was chosen chaplain to Anne Hyde, Duchess of York. This Father was thrice imprisoned for the faith, but no record has come down under whose reign. Probably during the persecution revived by the 'Titus Oates' plot, for, during the reign of James II. he was again at the Court. A sermon of his "on the joys of heaven" preached at Windsor 1686, is still extant.<sup>23</sup> He was elected Provincial four times, in 1662, in 1671, in 1680, and lastly, in 1689. Ill health forced him to resign his office, and he retired to Douai,<sup>24</sup> where he died, in 1698. The Provincial Chapter of 1671, was held at St. James' Palace. But a fresh storm was already gathering; the suspicion which arose after the death of Anne Hyde in 1671, that the Duke of

Province, the archives of Douai have all been destroyed, and a certain amount of uncertainty must rest over the whole. Whatever may have been the precise denomination of the sons of St. Francis, who returned to labour in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is certain that they one and all were worthy descendants of their Seraphic Father, and that, in the words of Father A. Parkinson,<sup>1</sup> who wrote in 1726, "considering the time of its date and slender number of its members, this Province is as holy and as learned as was the former."

<sup>1</sup> *Collect. Angl. Min.*, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter Register, p. 68., apud Oliver.

<sup>22</sup> Chapter Register, p. 194.

<sup>23</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 549.

<sup>24</sup> In the catalogue of the Provinces of the Order in the year 1680, given in Hueber's *Menologium*, pp. 173—183, Douai, which had belonged to the French since 1667, is put down with Ypres, Cambrai, and other cities as belonging to the Province of S. Andrew amongst the lilies, comprising Artois in Belgium.

York was a Catholic and his subsequent marriage with a Catholic princess in 1673, led to the penal laws against Catholics being put into force,<sup>25</sup> even before the breaking out of the Titus Oates' plot, in 1678. The Chapters of 1674 and 1677,<sup>26</sup> were held at Somerset House, where the Queen's<sup>27</sup> Chapel was. Ven. Father John Wall, *alias* Francis Webb, was martyred at Worcester in 1679. Ven. Father Charles Mahony was hanged and then butchered alive, at Ruthin in Denbighshire the same year.<sup>28</sup>

Venerable Father Francis Lewison, in religion Ignatius à Sta Clara, was imprisoned in 1679, where he died of starvation, at the end of fourteen months of close captivity in fetters.<sup>29</sup> Fathers Bernardine Langworth, Francis à Sta. Magdalena, and Gregory Jones, were prisoners for the Faith during six years.<sup>30</sup> Father William Nappier, *alias* Russel, a native of Oxford, was also imprisoned in 1678, where he remained till 1684, when he was sentenced to exile.<sup>31</sup> He was chaplain to the Spanish ambassador. He was imprisoned with a secular priest<sup>32</sup> and two Bene-

<sup>25</sup> Lingard, Vol. IX., p. 119.

<sup>26</sup> It is worthy of remark, that the Provincial who succeeded Father John Cross, Father Daniel à Sto Francisco, at the date when the change occurs in the Chapter-Registers, had already been Provincial in 1668. Father Nicholas à Sta Cruce, was likewise elected both before and after 1675. In addition to all that has been already said about the little real importance or difference to be attached to the terms, Recollect, or Strict, or Regular Observance in England, it might be stated that the present most Rev. Father General signs himself *Strictioris Observantiæ*, simply because he made his profession in a Province which was so called.

<sup>27</sup> Catharine of Braganza.

<sup>28</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 565. This Friar really belongs to the Irish Province although he won his martyr's crown in Wales.

<sup>29</sup> Chapter Register, p. 118,    <sup>30</sup> Oliver, *Collect.* p. 565.    <sup>31</sup> Oliver, *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Dodd, vol. iii., p. 400, states this priest, William Parry, to have been a Franciscan, but Challoner states he was a secular priest, and the Franciscan authorities make no mention of him. Possibly like William Ward, *alias* Webster, who suffered under Charles I. in 1640, he was a member of the Third Order.

dictines on the suspicion of being a priest, and condemned to death. The sentence however, was not executed, and in 1684, he was banished to France and ended his life at Douai, where he died in 1693. The Provincial Chapter of 1680, was held at Princenhoff, the residence of the English Franciscan nuns settled at Bruges, but the intermediate congregation, in the following year, assembled at York. In 1683, the Chapter was again held in London, and Father Gervase Cartwright was elected. This Friar was a confessor for the Faith, for he was arrested at the Revolution of 1688, thrown into Leicester gaol, and sentenced to death, which sentence was, after over two years imprisonment, changed to banishment.<sup>33</sup> He died at Bruges in 1691. The chapter meeting of 1686, when Father John Cross was re-elected, was again held at Somerset House, but on this occasion scarcely for the sake of security, since in the same year the Friars established a mission at Baddesley,<sup>34</sup> and the Provincial preached publicly before the King and Queen, on the Feast of St. Benedict. In the following year he published a book entitled, *An Apology for the contemplations on the Life and Glory of Holy Mary, the Mother of Jesus*, which he dedicated to the Queen of James II.<sup>35</sup> The year 1687 was an eventful one for the Order, for during Father John Cross' visitation of the Province, ten new residences were presented to him by charitable benefactors and founders, namely, at York, of the Holy Sacrament; Hexham, St. Antony of Padua, Goosenargh in Lancaster, of the Holy Cross; Holywell, St. Winifred; Leominster, of the Holy Trinity; Abergavenny, of the Immaculate Conception; Birmingham, St. Mary Magdalen; Warwick, St. Mary of the Angels; Monmouth, St. Francis of Assisi. In the

<sup>33</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 565.      <sup>34</sup> Chapter Register, p. 184.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 549.



course of the same year, the Friars obtained a lease of ten years, of premises near the arches in Lincoln's Inn Fields, previously occupied by the countess of Bath, and established a community of ten members.<sup>36</sup> All seemed to promise well. Father James Ayray (Alban à Sta. Agatha, who had been chosen chronologist of the Province, at the congregation held in London, October the eleventh, 1675, preached at Somerset House before the Queen Dowager.<sup>37</sup> He was chaplain to the Spanish Ambassador, and a distinguished preacher. Father Angelus Bix's sermon at Somerset House on the Good Friday of 1688, was published by command of Queen Mary Beatrix. But as soon as the news of the landing of the Prince of Orange, in the November of 1688, reached London, the discontented part of the population made a desperate attack on the Lincoln's Inn Friary, and were only prevented from carrying out their design of demolishing it by a guard sent by the king. Even when forced to leave the country, King James was mindful of the safety of the Friars, for the Provincial received the following letter from the Right Rev. Bishop Leyburn.<sup>38</sup>

*For Mr. Cross.*

" Verie Rev. Father,—I am commanded by the Kinge to lett you know, that since the Rabble hath alreadye been very insolent and troublesome to you, att your Residence in Lincoln's-inne-fields, and is like to be more hereafter, it is his Majesty's desire and pleasure, that for prevention of future dangers and inconveniences, you, with the rest of

<sup>36</sup> Oliver, p. 547—48.

<sup>37</sup> Catherine of Braganza.

<sup>38</sup> John Leyburn, Bishop of Adrumetum, cons. Sept. 9th, 1685 Vicar Apostolic, then Bishop of Chalcedon. Died June 20th, 1702, æt. eighty-three.

your Fathers, retire from that place.—I am, verie Rev. Father, your most affectionate Servant,

“LEYBURN.”<sup>39</sup>

November 15th.

The community removed such property as they possessed on the sixteenth of November, and the Friars dispersed to different houses. Father J. Cross retired to Douai, where he died in 1689. The Friars' church at Birmingham, of which the first stone had been laid in 1687, by Father Leo of St. Mary Magdalen Randolph, and which had been blessed in the September of 1688 by Bishop Giffard, was defaced and burnt by order of Lord Delamere, together with the Friary adjoining it which had been commenced that very same year. A few days later the Birmingham rabble pulled down what had escaped the fire and tore up the very foundations. Fathers Francis Hardwick and William Lockier were, for several months, consigned to Newgate in the December of 1688. F.F. Daniel Selby and Lewis Grimbalsen were immured in York Castle, and Father Bernardine Barras was confined in the dungeon of the Kidcote prison, at the end of York Bridge.<sup>40</sup> Father Angelus Fortescue was arraigned at the King's Bench for his priesthood,<sup>41</sup> the year is, however, uncertain. He was chaplain to Sir John Shelley, and was elected Provincial in 1710. The next three General Chapters were held in London; but at the Chapter of 1698, Father Paul of St. Francis Atkinson, who had been summoned to attend it, failed to appear. Enquiry was made and it was discovered that he had been apprehended, hurried off to gaol, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment in Hurst Castle on account of his priest-

<sup>39</sup> Franciscan Register apud Oliver, p. 212.

<sup>40</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 565.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 570.

hood. This Friar was a native of Yorkshire and was professed at Douai in 1673. He was at one time lector of theology and definitor of the Province. In 1687 he was sent on the English Mission where he was noted for his zeal and diligence in winning back wanderers to the true fold. Every effort was made to obtain his release from prison, but in vain, and he remained in close confinement, during thirty years of hourly martyrdom,<sup>42</sup> till God called him to receive his immortal crown on the fifteenth of October, 1729.

Father Randolf died at Coventry in 1699. There must have been a community re-established in this town, once so famous in the history of the Order, for he is mentioned as guardian of Coventry.<sup>43</sup> There was a small community at Worcester, where a mission was established about 1685. Father Antony Parkinson was guardian here in 1704, but that the Friars in England at this period were obliged frequently to live either in isolated missions or as chaplains in private families, is evident from the instructions given by Father Bonaventura à Sta. Anna Parry, Provincial in 1701, to one of his subjects. These instructions have been preserved<sup>44</sup> in his own handwriting, and although the Spirit of the Seraphic Patriarch of Assisi breathes in every line, they are clearly addressed to those whose lives had to be spent without the aids of community life. Amongst those reconciled to the Church about this time was Sir Henry Fletcher of Hutton, Cumberland, Bart., who was received by Father Martin à Sto. Carolo Grin-

<sup>42</sup> Oliver, *Collect.*, p. 566. The Chapter Register adds: "Though not cut off by the persecutor's sword, still, we piously trust, he did not forego the palm of martyrdom. Wherefore we do not commend him so much to the prayers of our brethren, as we propose him as a model for their imitation."

<sup>43</sup> Oliver, *Collect.* p. 564.

<sup>44</sup> Oliver, *Ibid.* p. 569.

stone, Provincial in 1707. Sir Henry built a beautiful Friary Church at his own expense at Douai,<sup>45</sup> where he died and was buried at St. Bonaventure's; Father Grinston likewise died at Douai, 1629, and was buried in his convert's grave. In 1710 we find Father A. Parkinson guardian of Oxford. In 1713 he was elected Provincial. To this learned Friar's researches we owe the valuable *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica*, the most reliable and complete record of the First English Province. This work was written in 1720, and was published at the request of the Fathers assembled at the Provincial Chapter of 1725. Father Parkinson was re-elected Provincial in 1722, and represented the English Province at the General Chapter held in Rome, 1723, to elect the eighty-first General of the Order. Father Parkinson died in 1729.

In 1713, Father Mathew Pritchard was made Bishop of Myra, by Clement XI., and appointed Vicar Apostolic for "Wilts, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucester, Hereford, and the Principality of Wales,"<sup>46</sup> an office he discharged during forty-five years with great zeal. He was the first to urge the publication of Father Parkinson's "*Collections*." In the second part of Doctor Challoner's *Missionary Priests*, there is a letter of Father Pritchard's containing the biography of Venerable Father John Kemble,<sup>47</sup> which he obtained from those who had known the martyr priest. A long Latin inscription on the slab which covers Doctor Pritchard's remains in St. Kenelm's Church, Rockfield,<sup>48</sup> bears witness to his many virtues and the high esteem in which he was held by all.

The Friars had a school at Edgbaston,<sup>49</sup> as well as at

<sup>45</sup> Oliver, *Ibid.*, p. 569. This beautiful church was solemnly consecrated by the Archbishop of Cologne, November the thirteenth, 1712.

<sup>46</sup> Oliver, p. 389.

<sup>47</sup> He suffered 1679 in Herefordshire.

<sup>48</sup> Monmouthshire.

<sup>49</sup> Chapter Register, p. 184., apud. Oliver.



Baddesley. In the scanty records which exist of the second Province, mention is made of both schools. From the opening of the Baddesley mission in 1687, till the beginning of this century, when the school of Edgbaston seems "on account of the buildings being small and confined," to have been removed to Baddesley; Baddesley was the great literary establishment of the Order. It was a school for "the education of Franciscans in England,"<sup>50</sup> whereas Edgbaston seems to have been a simple school.<sup>51</sup> It is in accidental references that some idea of the missions which were founded and kept up by the Friars is gleaned. Soon after the full re-establishment of the Province in 1630, they had a mission at East Grinstead. The Venerable Father Bell was in charge of this mission when he was arrested in 1642.<sup>52</sup> In 1703, there is a mention of Father Howarden, at Lower Hall near Preston, in Lancashire.<sup>53</sup> In 1734, Father John Beaumont is mentioned as "Guardian of the Custody of Bristol,"<sup>54</sup> and in 1745, as

<sup>50</sup> Oliver, p. 326.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. Milner was educated at Edgbaston, by the Fathers who came over when the French took Douai, in 1794. They seem to have "opened" this school. Mention is however made of it in 1730, and again in 1766, when "to the sincere regret of the Clifford family" their chaplain, Father James Frost, O.S.F., was recalled to be president of Edgbaston school. Oliver, p. 309.

<sup>52</sup> Quite recently a gentleman, a convert, picked up at an old bookstall the very diary the Martyr had in his hands, when arrested. A volume of records which would have supplied much in the history of the Order, has, alas, been irretrievably lost. The East Grinstead mission was given up before 1794. For the Rev. Father O'Farrell the last of F. Gennings' sons, who died in 1877, and who knew of its having existed *as a fact*, distinctly stated it had been given up ere he entered the Order.

<sup>53</sup> Oliver, p. 559.

<sup>54</sup> Oliver, p. 240. Whatever this Custody may have comprised, the city of Bristol itself formed no part of it, for no mission was established in Bristol till 1743, and it was the sons of St. Ignatius who first opened a chapel there for the Flemish zinc workers, who refused to come over

Chaplain of Tor Abbey, in Devonshire.<sup>55</sup> In 1746, Father Germanus Holmes, at one time lector of philosophy at St. Bonaventure's, Douai, after suffering various insults from the dregs of the populace, in hatred of his priestly character, was consigned by the magistrates to Lancaster Castle, loaded with iron chains, where after about four months he died, not without suspicion of poison administered to him by a wicked woman.<sup>56</sup> But in spite of occasional passionate outbursts of hatred, the condition of Catholics in England was slowly improving, although they were specially excluded from the relief afforded to all non-conformists by the Toleration Act of 1689,<sup>57</sup> they insensibly reaped some benefit from it. In 1750, Father Thomas Holmes, Provincial, reckoned the English Province as possessing about one hundred Friars. In 1761, Father Pacificus Baker certified the same to the General, and estimated the number of English nuns in the monasteries of Bruges and Aire<sup>58</sup> as eighty. Father Baker

unless free exercise of their religion were allowed them. (Evans, *History of Bristol*, vol. ii., p. 306. No city seems to have been more opposed to the true Faith. Towards the end of the reign of James II., 1687, even a priest saying Mass in a private house was arrested and imprisoned.

<sup>55</sup> Tor Abbey is one of the oldest missions in the west of England. In 1685, there is a record of its chaplain, a secular priest. Mass was said there in an upper room, till in 1779, George Carey, Esq., fitted up the old refectory of the Norbertine canons. In 1853, the present church was commenced, and solemnly consecrated in 1854.

<sup>56</sup> Chapter Register, 430., apud. Oliver, p. 566.

<sup>57</sup> Knight's *History of England*., vol. v., p. 57.

<sup>58</sup> The Poor Clare Monastery at Aire also owed its foundation to F. Gennings' zeal. In 1629, Sister Margaret Radcliffe with eighteen choir sisters, two novices and three lay-sisters, with the permission of their superiors, came to Aire from Gravelines, where the community expelled by the Huguenots from Veere, in Walcheren, in 1572, had been settled since 1608. The nuns of Aire placed themselves under the Friars of the English Province. In 1794, the nuns were confined in their own convent,

appears to have been attached to the Sardinian Chapel in London; and was present at the execution of Simon, Lord Lovat in 1647.<sup>59</sup>

In 1783, Father Pacificus Nutt, opened St. Peter's Chapel at Birmingham, he was elected Provincial in 1785, and again in 1794, and 1797. In 1791, Father Bernardine Collingridge afterwards Provincial, and Bishop of Thespia coadjutor, of the Western District, was sent from Douai to preside over the Seraphic school at Baddesley. After he was consecrated Bishop in 1807, he resided at Cannington, where he died in 1829. During the great Revolution in France when the French took Douai in 1793, the Friars were obliged to leave St. Bonaventure's. They made their escape, two at a time, through many dangers and all arrived in turn at Bruges, where the nuns of the Third Order settled at Princenhoff did all in their power to help them till they could pass over to England. The following year the nuns themselves were forced to leave Bruges and the remaining English Friars, fifteen in all, priests and lay brothers went with them to London.<sup>60</sup> The novitiate was established at Partheia. In 1818, Cardinal Weld offered Aston Hall to the Friars, and the

and their confessor, Father Pacificus Kingston, was thrown into a dungeon and would have been guillotined but for Robespierre's death. In 1799, the community came to England, in 1813, they settled at Clare House in Plymouth, and finally, after an attempt to settle again at Gravelines in 1834, the community from Aire, together with three filiations from the mother house at Gravelines, are now at Darlington. Besides the Poor Clares at Darlington, and the Franciscan nuns of the Third Order, now at Taunton, who came over at the Revolution, several convents of Poor Clare Colletines have been founded from Bruges. The convent of the Portiuncula at Baddesley founded 1850, the Sacred Heart, Notting-Hill, London, 1857; the Sacred Heart of Mary, Manchester, 1863; St. Joseph, York 1865; Bullingham nr. Hereford, and Arundel founded by the Duchess of Norfolk, 1886. <sup>59</sup> Oliver, p. 543.

<sup>60</sup> The nuns were received by Mr. Weld of Lulworth, who took a house for them in London, till they could settle at the Abbey House at Win-

novitiate was removed there. In 1823, owing to the small number of vocations the novitiate was given up.<sup>61</sup>

Gradually, as the old Fathers died off, it became impossible to supply the different missions, they were given up to the Bishops. In 1829, the school at Baddesley was broken up. The last regularly elected Provincial, Father Stephen Grafton, who had been professed at Douai, held his office for five years. In 1838, Father Francis Edgeworth was *minus canonicè* declared Provincial. Shortly after the succession was broken up, the Province came to an end. The few remaining Fathers had leave from Rome to live separately, independent of each other. The last of Fr. Genning's sons, Fr. Patrick O'Farrel, after being president of Baddesley, was missionary of Bristol for over thirty years. He purchased the Irvingite Chapel, now become St. Mary's Church. But in the midst of his truly apostolic labours, his one great hope and desire was to see the Order restored in England and the re-establishment of the Province, which had sprung into existence in the dark days of persecution and had been watered with the blood of so many martyrs. Urgent and renewed entreaties were made to the Franciscan Fathers of the Belgian Province of Recollects, to come over to England. When at length they consented to

chester. George III. took a warm though secret interest in the welfare of the Franciscan nuns, and also in that of all the English religious communities in the Low Countries. Hearing that the Bruges community knew not whither to take refuge, his Majesty desired Mr. Weld to tell them to come to England, and that they should not be molested, "Tell them," added the king, "to bring their church vestments, breviaries and such like, and I will give orders that they shall pass the Custom House." Then, recollecting that by law these things were condemned to the flames, his Majesty asked for the names of the different superiors, and when the nuns reached London, the trunks containing altar and church furniture were quietly passed by the chief officer, who alone was in the secret.

<sup>61</sup> Oliver, p. 326.



come, they were most cordially received by Fr. O'Farrell and Dr. Hendren, late Bishop of Clifton, who were both residing at the Convent of Taunton. Fr. O'Farrell made over to them the two seals<sup>62</sup> of the old Provinces of the Immaculate Conception, together with the few remaining records saved from Douai.

In 1858, the Bishop of Plymouth gave the Belgian Fathers leave to build a Church and Monastery at Trelawny—Sclerder, in Cornwall, and to this effect they obtained from the Sacred Congregation of the *Propaganda* a Rescript of Pope Pius IX., granting them the necessary faculties for the canonical foundation of their Monastery. The Fathers built a small church and residence, which, in 1864, they resigned to the Bishop of Plymouth. In 1862, the Church and Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi at West-Gorton near Manchester were commenced. A Seraphic school was later on attached to this Monastery. In 1873, the Archbishop of Westminster gave the Fathers the Church at Stratford with a house which has been adapted for a small community. In 1884, they undertook the mission of Upton, where they have commenced a Church dedicated to St. Antony of Padua, and have built a house for studies. In 1868, a Monastery was founded at Glasgow, and a large Church built, dedicated to St. Francis. The novitiate for these Fathers is at Killybeg, where a foundation was made in 1860. At the Provincial Chapter held at St. Trond in Belgium in 1887, these five houses were formed into a Custody and the Very Rev. Father Davis, formerly guardian of Upton, was appointed Custos. In 1880, when the Religious Orders were expelled from France, a good many of the

<sup>62</sup> Neither of these two seals was the original seal used by Brother Agnellus. Eccleston, in his *De Adventu Minorum*, p. 54, tells us that the impression of Brother Agnellus' seal was a lamb and a cross. This seal was destroyed by Brother Elias.

Franciscan Fathers of the Province of St. Louis of Toulouse of the *Regular Observance*, came over to England. They first set foot at Taunton, where, near the tomb of the last of Father Genning's sons, Doctor Hendren and Father O'Farrell, they spent about two years engaged solely in training their novices and students, and preparing themselves for missionary work in England. In 1882, they obtained from the Bishop of Clifton and the Propaganda the necessary faculties to found a canonical Friary at Clevedon, in Somersetshire. In 1886, they built a Church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, which was consecrated in July 1887. In 1883, for want of sufficient accommodation, a temporary residence for the students was opened at Portishead, a village about five miles off. In 1886, when the students returned to France, a small Church dedicated to St. Joseph was built for the numerous converts made during the residence of the Friars at Portishead. This mission is at present served from Clevedon. In 1884, the Friars opened a third mission and residence dedicated to our Lady of the Angels, at Saltash in Cornwall, where in 1887, a Seraphic School was begun. The same year a Friary and Church were commenced at South Ascot.

It does not enter into the province of this historical sketch to speak of another more distant branch of the great Franciscan Family, the Capuchins, who have been for some years in England where they have now a regularly organized Province.

The history of the Friars Minor in England, of which we have tried to give some faint idea in this short sketch, ends almost where it began, with the landing of the sons of St. Francis on our shores. May it be reserved to them in God's Providence to revive the traditions and glories of the English Province by once more spreading over our country the true spirit of the Gospel.

*CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.*





CHRONOLOGICAL CATALOGUE OF THE SAINTS  
AND BLESSED AND FAMOUS MEMBERS OF  
THE ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS, MENTIONED  
IN THE FOUR VOLUMES OF THE *AUREOLE  
SERAPHIQUE*.<sup>1</sup>

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THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

1220. SS. Berardus and companions, of the Order of Friars Minor, First Martyrs of the Seraphic Order. Vol. I., p. 99.

1226. Our Holy Father St. Francis, Vol. I., p. 3. Vol. III., p. 274. Stigmata, Vol. III., p. 198. Translation, Vol. II., p. 288. Invention, Vol. IV., p. 164.

1227. SS. Daniel and his companions, Martyrs at Ceuta, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 296.

1231. BB. John of Perugia and Peter of Sasso Ferrato, Martyrs at Valencia, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 96.

1231. St. Antony of Padua, Apostle and Wonder-worker of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 382. Translation, Vol. I., p. 250.

1231. St. Elisabeth of Hungary, Duchess of Thuringia, Widow, of the Third Order. Vol. IV., p. 74.

1232. B. Bentivoglio, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor, Vol. I., p. 31.

<sup>1</sup> The names only are given of those of whom the lives are written, or short notices inserted. The names in italics are of those whose feast is not kept in the Church, though some of them bear the title of Blessed by right of immemorial tradition.

1232. B. Benvenuto of Gubbio, Lay-Brother, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 427.
1232. B. Pellegrino, Lay-Brother, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 527.
1236. B. Rizziero, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 522.
1236. B. Philippa Mareri, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. I., p. 257.
1237. B. Roger of Todi, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor, Vol. I., p. 442.
1241. B. Luchesio, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 131.
1242. BB. Stephen of Narbonne, and Raymund of Carbona, Martyrs in France, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 356.
1242. B. Helen Enselmini of Padua, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. IV., p. 36.
1242. B. Gerard of Villamagna, Hermit, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 303.
1242. St. Viridiana, Virgin, Solitary, of the Third Order. Vol. I., p. 239.
1246. B. Umiliana Cerchi, Widow, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 275.
1250. B. Guy of Cortona, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 379.
1252. St. Ferdinand, King of Castile, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 300.
1252. St. Rose of Viterbo, Virgin, of the Third Order. Vol. III., p. 98.
1252. St. Clare of Assisi, Virgin, First Abbess of the Second Order, Vol. II., p. 557. Translation, Vol. III., p. 272. Invention, Vol. III., p. 222.
1253. St. Agnes of Assisi, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. IV., p. 66.
1254. B. Andrew of Spello, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 349.

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1258. B. Gualterius, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 540.
1260. B. Liberato of Lauro, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 431.
1260. B. Gandolfo of Binasco, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 201.
1262. B. Egidius, or Giles, of Assisi, Cleric, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 89.
1268. B. Salome, Queen of Galicia, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. IV., p. 71.
1270. St. Louis, King of France, of the Third Order. Vol. III., p. 50.
1270. B. Isabella of France, sister of St. Louis, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. III., p. 89.
1271. B. John of Pinna, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 276.
1274. St. Bonaventure, Cardinal, Bishop and Doctor of the Church, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 446. Translation, Vol. I., p. 448.
1280. B. Agnes of Bohemia, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. I., p. 339.
1280. B. Nevolo, artisan, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 530.
1282. St. Benvenuto, Bishop of Osimo, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 517.
1282. B. Torello of Poppi, Hermit, of the Third Order. Vol. I., p. 463.
1284. B. Margaret Colonna, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. IV., p. 170.
1289. B. John of Parma, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 493.
1289. B. Conrad of Ascoli, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 83.
1289. B. Benvenuto of Recanati, Lay-Brother of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 175.
1289. B. Peter of Siena of the Third Order. Vol. I., p. 456.

1292. B. Cunegundes, Queen of Poland, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. II., p. 523.

1292. *Nicholas IV.* (Father Jerome of Ascoli,) Pope, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 488, note 14.

1295. B. Davanzato, Priest, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 441.

1297. St. Louis of Anjou, Bishop of Toulouse, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 26.

1297. St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent, of the Third Order. Vol. I., p. 272.

1298. B. Yolande, Duchess of Poland, Widow, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. II., p. 376.

1299. B. Gerard of Lunel, Hermit, of the Third Order, Vol. II., p. 285.

#### FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

1300. B. Matthia of Nazzarei, Virgin, of the Order of St. Clare. Vol. I., p. 332.

1300. St. Bartolo, Priest, of the Third Order. Vol. IV., p. 165.

1302. B. Andrew of Segni, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 132.

1302. *St. Vivaldo*, Hermit, of the Third Order. Vol. IV., p. 168, note 2.

1303. St. Yves, Priest, of the Third Order. Vol. II., p. 214.

1304. B. Peter of Treja, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 446.

1304. B. Raniero of Arezzo, Lay-Brother, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. IV., p. 34.

1304. *B. Jacopone of Todi*, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 555, note 4.

1306. B. Conrad of Offida, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. IV. p. 174.

1307. Jane of Signa, Virgin, Recluse, of the Third Order. Vol. IV., p. 160.



1307. *B. Gauthier of Bruges*, Bishop of Poitiers, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. III., p. 240.

1308. *B. John Duns Scotus*, Doctor of Mary, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. IV., p. 44.

1309. *B. Angela of Foligno*, Penitent, of the Third Order. Vol. I., p. 536.

1312. *Father Giunta Bevagnati*, Confessor and biographer of St. Margaret of Cortona, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 273, note 4.

1314. *Father Arnaldo*, Confessor and biographer of B. Angela of Foligno, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. I., p. 537, note 1.

1315. *B. Raymond Lulle*, Martyr, of the Third Order. Vol. IV., p. 122.

1322. *St. Thomas of Tolentino*, Martyr in India, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 61.

1322. *B. Francis of Fabriano*, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 171.

1322. *B. John of Alvernia*, Priest, of the Order of Friars Minor. Vol. II., p. 553.

1323. *St. Elzear*, Count of Ariano, of the Third Order. Vol. III., p. 232.

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There are many more servants of God who lived in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, whose cause of beatification is being advanced by the Holy See.

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